

**TUSCARAWAS COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES  
PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING 'GOOD-BYE VISITS'**

**PURPOSE**

A 'good-bye visit' is held between the child and his/her birth family after the termination of parental rights. This visit is held to facilitate closure to their parent/child relationship and to give the child 'permission' to move on and accept an adoptive family.

**Prior to the Good-bye Visit**

**A. Worker meets with the child to:**

- a. Explain the purpose of the good-bye visit;
- b. Explain why he/she is no longer able to live with his/her birth parents;
- c. Explain that termination of parental rights was not the child's fault;
- d. Help the child understand the permanence of termination of parental rights;
- e. Help the child identify and process his/her feelings;
- f. Help the child decide and practice what he/she wants to say to his/her parent(s);
- g. Help the child choose a present for his/her parent(s), if appropriate, and based on the child's age and wishes, i.e. photos, scrapbook, etc.
- h. Help the child write a letter to his/her parent(s), if appropriate, and based on the child's age and wishes;
- i. Let the child know that the visit will be ended if he/she feels it is becoming unsafe;
- j. Describe where the visit will take place and the general order of the visit;
- k. Set up a support plan for the child for after the visit.

**B. Worker meets with the parents (and others attending the visit) to:**


- a. Explain the importance and purpose of the good-bye visit;
- b. Coach the parent(s) on how to explain the reason for termination of parental rights to the child;
- c. Encourage the parent(s) to accept the responsibility for what has occurred rather than to blame the child welfare system, another family member, or the child;
- d. Help the family identify and process their feelings;
- e. Identify the following messages that the parent(s) must give the child and how they will be given –
  1. ownership of the abuse
  2. ownership of the reason for placement
  3. ownership of the reason for custody
  4. closure to going home
  5. message that parent(s) will be okay
  6. hope that the child will not repeat the dysfunctional pattern
  7. permission for the child to attach to and love a new family
  8. permission for the child to go on with his/her life
- f. Help the parent(s) decide on gifts they will bring, i.e. photo albums, scrapbooks, etc.
- g. Help the parent(s) write a letter to the child;
- h. Describe where the visit will take place and the general order of the visit;
- i. Help the parent(s) identify support systems for themselves, including transportation to the visit, counseling after the visit, etc.;
- j. Decide on the 'rules' everyone will follow during the visit.
- k. Ask the parent's permission to video tape the visit and take pictures so that both the child and parent have copies.

**C. The Rules and General Order of the Good-bye Visit**

- a. A letter is sent to the parent(s) scheduling the good-bye visit. The parent is scheduled to arrive early. If he/she does not come, the visit is **not** rescheduled.
- b. Good-bye visits must be scheduled and take place no later than two weeks after the date the agency receives a judgment entry granting permanent custody. Exceptions to this time frame should only be granted by the supervisor responsible for the case in extenuating circumstances and the visit should take place as close to the two-week period as possible. The failure of a case manager to planfully schedule the good-bye visit within the outlined parameters is not an extenuating circumstance to justify a deviation from the two-week requirement.
- c. TCJFS is always the site for a good-bye visit. Any exception must be prior approved by the supervisor.
- d. A good-bye visit should last 30 to 60 minutes, no longer.
- e. The family's caseworker monitors the visit from inside the visitation room so that the worker can be prepared to intervene if necessary. A Family Service Aide may assist in setting up and monitoring the video equipment inside the observation room, but this aide is not to be responsible for monitoring the visit.
- f. The child comes into the visitation room first and leaves last.
- g. The child and parent are never left alone.
- h. The worker reminds everyone of the purpose of the visit – "It is time to say good-bye"; "This is a very sad time."
- i. The worker helps the parent give the child a closure message and a blessing – "Mom and I have talked, and she has things she wants to say to you."
- j. The worker helps the child give his/her message to the parent – "Johnny and I have been talking about the things he wants to say to you."
- k. The child and parent exchange presents with each other.
- l. Pictures are taken of the child and parent.
- m. The worker prompts the child and parent to say their good-byes – "It's OK to say 'I love you', 'I'll miss you', 'Be well'."
- n. The parent leaves the visitation room first.
- o. The worker processes feelings with the child without overdoing it, because the child is probably in a state of shock – "This is a very sad time," "It's OK to cry," "Do you need a hug?"

**D. After the Visit**

- a. The worker should talk about the visit to debrief him/herself and get support from coworkers.
- b. Check on the child within the week and continue to help him/her process his/her feelings.
- c. All videotapes are reviewed by the worker or Family Service Aide prior to being given to the child or parent.

  
Michelle Tope, Director

5/13/13  
Effective Date