



Strengthen the foundation for families

How Does a Supervised Visitation Order Work?

What is Supervised Visitation?

In all cases, courts place the safety and best interests of children above all else when parents go through a divorce.

Sometimes, based on the safety and protection of the children, a judge may order that a parent only has contact with their children in the presence of a neutral third party. *This is known as supervised visitation.*

Who Pays for Supervised Visitation and How Much Does it Cost?

- **Intake appointment.** Both parents must complete an intake appointment to discuss the agreement for service, rules, procedures, and fee schedules.
 - The cost for this is anywhere from \$50 to \$100 per parent.
- **Supervised visitation.** There is generally a minimum number of hours required (2 or more) but rates and length of time may vary due to the number of children, location of the visits, holiday vs. non-holiday dates, and other variables.
 - Rates may run from \$55 to \$100 or more per hour. This is part of the services what you'll need to discuss with the Director and/or administrative staff. Also, you need to inform them which parent is responsible for paying for the supervised visit, but generally, it is the parent required to have the supervised visit who must bear the costs.
- **Supervised exchanges.** Separate from visitations.
 - Expect the cost for this to be on the high end of the visitation rate.
- **Court testimony.** In some cases, especially when there is a dispute or when parents are seeking a modification, a provider may have to testify in court.
 - Costs for this can run \$100 or more per hour.

Supervised Visitation Violations

When supervised visitation is implemented, it is done so with a series of terms and provisions set for in a court-ordered visitation order. A parent must comply with those terms and provisions, or they will be subject to penalties.



Strengthen the foundation for families

Orders are in place for a reason, and when there are violations, they are treated seriously because they could be putting the child's safety and well-being in jeopardy. There are also times when visitation schedules may need to be changed for legitimate reasons (such as starting a new job, schedule changes, etc.). In those cases, it's best to file a formal modification order with the court or child services agency in your state.

[Attempting to modify an order on your own without official sanctioning can cause you significant problems later.](#)

Parents should also be careful about speaking in negative terms about the other parent during visits. You can also get into some hot water if you coach children to act a certain way during a supervised visit or say certain things that come off as obviously scripted.

Ways visitation can be violated

Visitation violations may vary from state to state, but some of the more common violations include:

- Not picking up or dropping off at the right place or time.
- Arbitrarily changing the visitation schedule.
- Withholding visitation from the other parent.
- Overstaying a visit with the child.
- Attempting to visit the child at non-appointed times.
- Allowing somebody else who has not been appointed by the court to pick up or drop off the child.

Effective practices when seeking unsupervised visits.

Here are some suggestions that might be helpful to you:

- Read the court order.
- Arrive and depart on time.
- Avoid discussing the court case or terms of the visit with your children.
- Don't ask your children about the other parent's activities and relationships.
- Avoid making your children messengers to the other parent.
- Stick to brief and positive good-byes to your children when your visit is over.



Strengthen the foundation for families

What are the basic rules for supervised visitation?

At a minimum, and in accordance with the court-ordered supervised visitation, a supervisor will follow and enforce several basic visitation rules. They will include:

- The supervisor will be always present.
- All parent/child contact will be within sight and hearing of the supervisor at all times.
- There will be no threatening, spanking or hitting children during the visit.
- No visit will be allowed if a parent appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- There will be no derogatory comments made about the other parent or their family members.
- No gathering of information about the other parent, extended family, or family situations will be allowed.

Services NOT covered by supervised visitation?

- Supervised visitation providers will not provide legal advice, or act as a third party that a parent can vent upon. They also will not enter mediation or remedial parent education services. It is also not their job to provide a custodial evaluation.
- Above all else, if a supervisor for visitation witnesses abuses or illegal behavior, no confidential privilege exists. Any violations of this nature will be reported to law enforcement, or the appropriate agency as provided by law.
- *A provider also has the right to interrupt, reschedule or terminate the visit if children become distressed or their safety is at risk.*