

FAMILY TIME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I get started in the Program?

Getting started in the Program is really very easy. Simply contact the Program Coordinator to schedule your Intake Interview/Orientation. The Program Coordinator can be reached at 734.926.0158.

Where do the visits/exchanges take place?

All visitations and exchanges take place on site at Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County (CSSW), located at 4925 Packard Rd. Ann Arbor, MI 48108. Private visitation rooms are provided for all visits, exchanges either take place in a visitation room or in the lobby of the facility.

How long will I have to participate in supervised visitation or exchanges? Is there an average length of time parents spend in the Program?

Catholic Social Services does not determine how long parents must participate in the Program. There is no average length of stay or completion of the Program, this is up to the courts, and/or the parties themselves. If a parent wishes to stop visitation at CSSW, they may do so at any time, however there may be sanctions by the court for doing so. This is a question you should ask legal counsel or the courts about.

How much will it cost me to participate?

The intake fee ranges from \$25 to \$100 per parent based on income of the party paying. Typically each parent pays their own intake fee, unless the court order sets forth other arrangements.

The costs for Supervised Parenting and Exchange Services will be calculated at your intake interview/Orientation. The costs are calculated on a sliding scale depending on the visiting parent's income. Typically, visiting parents pay for sessions, however, the Program will determine who is responsible for fees unless the court order states who is to pay the fees.

Individuals who have experienced domestic violence and are at risk for continued abuse may be exempt from paying fees, the Program has the discretion to determine this.

What happens if I don't comply or don't want to participate in Supervised Parenting or Exchanges?

If there is a court order and you fail to comply with the court order, you could be held in contempt of court by the judge, this could lead to criminal or civil charges. If there is a court order for supervised visits or exchanges and you have concerns about compliance, you should speak with the Program Coordinator, the Court or Friend of the Court and/or your attorney. The Program Coordinator cannot advise you, but may be able to provide helpful information regarding your concerns.

If there is not a court order for supervised visits, then visitation or exchange service participation is voluntary. However, before you decide to proceed or not to proceed with visitation, you should speak to the Program Coordinator about your concerns. Some parents have fears about visitation because they don't understand how the Program works. The Program Coordinator can provide helpful information about Program Services.

How can I get copies of what is documented about supervised parenting sessions or exchanges?

Copies of what is documented during supervised parenting sessions are called "Session Reports." To get copies of the reports, parents must submit a written request for copies of session reports accompanied by the appropriate fee (\$25 per ten session reports, or any portion thereof). Please keep in mind that it takes a minimum of 10 business days for the program to generate copies of session reports once a request for reports has been submitted along with the appropriate fee.

What can I do during a visit?

During visitation, parents are permitted to choose the activities as long as they are within the guidelines of the Program and do not pose any concerns. The Program allows parents to choose what to do during their parenting time. Parents typically share meals, play games, participate in activities and watch movies/play video games. If you have questions about what you can do during a visit, you can speak to the Program Coordinator or Program Monitor, they will be happy to assist you in preparing a visitation plan. (Please See the Supplemental "Guide to a successful visit" for more helpful tips for visitation).

Is someone in the room throughout the visit?

A staff member of the Program (referred to as a "Monitor") will supervise all interactions between noncustodial parents and the child(ren). Sometimes, if appropriate (as determined by the program) staff will use a two way mirror to supervise visits and may not be physically present in the room.

What is the monitor's role?

The monitor is there to ensure safety and security for all participants, and to help out during visitation if necessary. Monitors may intervene if necessary to redirect conversations and/or activities. Monitors also document what happens during sessions. Monitors may also provide support to children or either parent if necessary. Monitors have the discretion and authority to determine what is appropriate during visitation, and may also end a visit if necessary.

What rights does the child have during a visit?

Children are able to influence visits to whatever degree necessary to ensure that they are emotionally and physically safe. The Monitor will work with the children if necessary to determine a visitation plan.

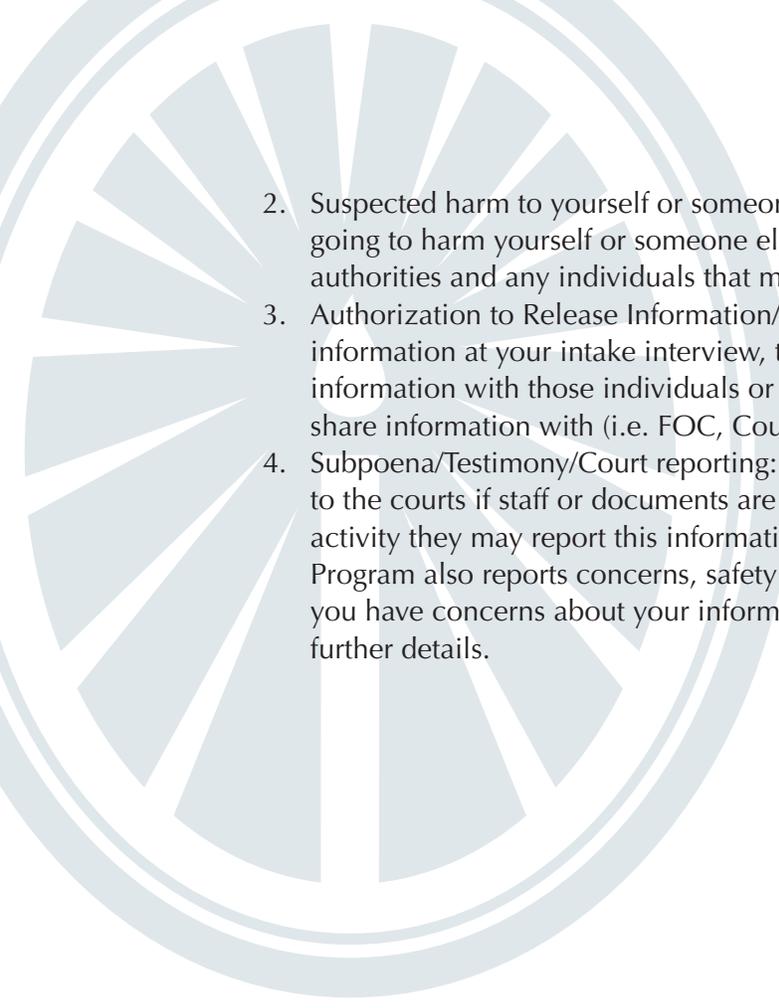
When Can I schedule my first visit?

Once both parties have completed an orientation/intake interview, the Program Coordinator will contact the visiting parent to let them know they may schedule a session. Visits will not be scheduled until both parties have completed their intake interview.

How will the information I share with the Program be kept confidential?

While the Program works hard to ensure confidentiality for parents, there are certain circumstances where the Program must report information about you to other sources. Some of the reasons the Program might report information are as follows:

1. Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect: all staff in the Program are mandated reporters and must report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Services. If a report must be made, you may be notified.

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2. Suspected harm to yourself or someone else: If the Program believes that you are going to harm yourself or someone else, they may report this information to the proper authorities and any individuals that may be affected.
 3. Authorization to Release Information/Records: If you choose to sign a release of information at your intake interview, the Program may communicate and share information with those individuals or organizations whom you wish the Program to share information with (i.e. FOC, Court, Attorneys, therapists, etc.)
 4. Subpoena/Testimony/Court reporting: The Program may have to provide information to the courts if staff or documents are subpoenaed. 5. If the program suspects criminal activity they may report this information to the proper authorities. In addition, The Program also reports concerns, safety risks and involuntary terminations to the Court. If you have concerns about your information please speak to the Program Coordinator for further details.