

DEVELOPMENTALLY-SOUND VISITING

- **Visits may be the most important service provided to children & parents in child welfare**
 - Visits=an essential way to reduce the effects of loss and harm of separation for children
 - Visits=the only way parents can demonstrate change in responsiveness to their children
- **Visit quality—in which a parent can give sustained attention to their children—is more important than visit frequency [minimum= at least 2 visits/week for young children and at least 1 visit/week for older children]**
- **Parents require support to meet the needs of their children—especially play needs and separation-related needs—during the visit, resulting in productive, quality visits (instead of “monitoring” or “supervision”)**
- **The needs of the child guide frequency, length & location of visits.**
 - Unless visits with babies occur in the home where they live, daily visits—that might be optimal for building attachment—may be too stressful
 - For young children, visits less than 2 hours must be designed to give the parent optimal opportunities to attune to the child
 - For preschool and elementary school children, visits longer than 2 hours may be too cognitively and emotionally demanding
 - For sibling groups, visits all together more than once/week may be too emotionally demanding
 - For children age 3 and older, spending a portion of the visit in big muscle activities that fit their energy levels, preferably outside, is essential
 - Older children and teens do best in visits they help design in places they are accustomed to doing their familiar activities
 - Respecting the schedules of older children and teens may mean that they prefer once weekly visits of longer duration that they help to plan
 - Children need to visit consistently with their siblings to maintain attachments and feel a sense of belonging to their family
 - Children may be most comfortable in visits in their family’s home unless there are traumatic memories associated with it, or unsafe conditions that cannot be remedied, or even with support they cannot understand why they are leaving it again
 - Lengthy transport to and from visits are stressful for children and should be avoided with visit locations that fit the needs of the child
- **Visits remind the child of loss, and it is normal for children to react to loss before, during and after visits.**
- **Visit frequency, duration and location should always be adjustable based on the parent’s demonstration of meeting each child’s needs**