

## Determining the minimum number of visits needed each month

Instructions: This tool is a supplement to the Ohio's CPS Worker Manual. It is intended to provide best practice guidance in determining how often to visit individual case members.

	1 Visit Per Month	2 Visits Per Month	3 + Visits Per Month
Best Practice in Common Situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent involved in the case, but the goal is not reunification with the parent.</li> <li>• Child has PPLA custody status.</li> <li>• Child is not the target of case plan services and is not the ACV or CSR.</li> <li>• Family has already engaged in services and has had progress. Caseworker is primarily monitoring progress on services, and family is low or moderate risk rating</li> <li>• Case closure implies an assessment that children are safe. Therefore, best practice dictates a case never be closed without having made at least one successful home visit within the past two weeks, in which safety was assessed.</li> <li>• Protective Capacities are determined sufficient and there are no active safety threats.</li> <li>• Strengths to mitigate risk have been developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service needs require CW follow up to maintain progress.</li> <li>• After reunification or during extended trial home visits.</li> <li>• Child requires a specialized placement due to special, exceptional, or intensive needs.</li> <li>• Child is in independent living and has responsibility for his own living environment; agency believes child does not need additional support.</li> <li>• Case services are actively being provided to family members, CW is following up with progress on case plan services and/or making service linkages.</li> <li>• Repeated incidents of similar concern.</li> <li>• Risk Contributors are creating instability for an individual, and family is rated moderate to high risk level</li> <li>• CW is following up with progress on case plan services and/or making service linkages.</li> <li>• The caseworker is providing encouragement and accountability to individuals engaged in services to reduce risk.</li> <li>• Strengths identified and being developed to mitigate risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive service delivery required due to substantial needs identified, and high or intensive risk level</li> <li>• Child behaviors or emotional functioning create instability or require intensive support.</li> <li>• Intensive support and service follow up needed to avoid placement.</li> <li>• Family members have developmental delays that require additional external support.</li> <li>• Multiple Risk Contributors in family requiring dynamic intervention coordinating multiple service systems.</li> <li>• Family has an active voluntary safety plan.</li> <li>• New CA/N report is screened in.</li> <li>• <b>New member joins the household;</b> infant, spouse, grandparents, <b>boyfriend/girlfriend</b>, acquaintance.</li> <li>• Children with <b>high vulnerability</b> cared for by caretakers with <b>low protective capacity</b>, resulting in active safety threats</li> <li>• Protective Capacities of caregivers are uncertain, under assessment, or wavering</li> <li>• Acute crisis active.</li> <li>• Very limited identified strengths or development of strengths</li> </ul>
For Reference: Ohio Administrative Code <b>Minimum</b> Requirements. <b>Best Practice often exceeds minimum requirements.</b> <b>Rationale for making only minimum should be documented</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each child and adult participant receiving case plan services</li> <li>• Child's initial placement in a residential facility requires a contact within the first 10 days and a visit within first four weeks; monthly visits thereafter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AR Ongoing Case, Service Plan members.</li> <li>• Active Out-of-Home Safety Plan.</li> <li>• Initial Placement requires visit within first 7 days and again within first four weeks.</li> <li>• Children placed in treatment level foster homes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active In-Home Safety Plan (weekly visits required).</li> <li>• New CA/N report is screened in.</li> </ul>

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The following is supplemental guidance for visitation decisions highly dependent upon individual case (and individual case member) situations.

Assessment/Investigation	<p>Best Practice Considerations in the Initial Assessment phase of a case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All assessments must be <b>comprehensive, are</b> never incident based, or focused only on the reported concern.</li> <li>• The number of visits during the initial assessment phase of a case varies. Best practice calls for visits and fact gathering to continue until comprehensive assessment is achieved; this often requires an average of weekly contact with case members during the assessment phase.</li> <li>• It is best practice to complete a successful home visit to assess safety within two weeks prior to closure; case closure implies an assessment that children are safe.</li> </ul> <p>The following are examples of situations where additional visits are needed to achieve comprehensive assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety/Family Assessment remains underway.</li> <li>• Follow up interviews needed and/or interviewing all household members.</li> <li>• Household members have different schedules that may require additional visits.</li> <li>• CW follow-up to provide resources and linkages to services identified during initial visit.</li> <li>• CW follow-up to ensure family's engagement with referrals.</li> <li>• Cases presenting with possible concerns/identified risk contributors regarding substance abuse, domestic violence or mental health.</li> <li>• Safety concerns being evaluated or there is a safety plan in place.</li> <li>• Provision of safety related services required to prevent placement.</li> <li>• Intensive needs of multiple family members being assessed.</li> </ul>
Unable to locate	<p><b><u>Attempts to locate: When we don't know where to find parents</u></b></p> <p>If the whereabouts of the parent, guardian, custodian or child is unknown, the agency shall document all attempts to locate the person through a combination of contacts each month. Concerted efforts go beyond letters or phone calls. These efforts to locate parents may include a combination of the following each month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacting the parents at the last known addresses or phone numbers</li> <li>• Using the federal parent locator service by submitting JFS form 07713 to the local CSEA and reviewing case files/central registries.</li> <li>• Asking known relatives of parents' whereabouts.</li> <li>• Asking the children's current/previous schools for parent information</li> <li>• Contacting schools, relatives, utility companies, DJFS, CSEA, law enforcement, courts, prosecutor's office, community agencies Probation Officer, jail census, municipal and common pleas court schedules, or by sending letters to the person at their last known address.</li> </ul>

	<p>Case records shall contain documentation of the agency’s continuing attempts to locate the party until face-to-face contact is accomplished, the plan is amended or the case is closed.</p>
<p>Client whereabouts are known but individual remains evasive</p>	<p><b><u>Good Faith Efforts: Attempts at visits when whereabouts are known</u></b></p> <p>If the initial attempt to make monthly face-to-face contact was unsuccessful, the agency shall make a second attempt. If the second attempt is also unsuccessful, the agency shall make a third attempt within that calendar month. Alternative Response (AR) cases require a fourth attempt if the third attempt was unsuccessful. These attempts must be made for each child and parent, guardian, custodian or pre-finalized adoptive parent participating in and being provided services through the case plan.</p> <p>If a case plan participant did not receive a face-to-face visit, but the agency made three (four for AR cases) good faith attempts within a calendar month, the agency may be considered to be in compliance with the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) for that month. Please note that the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) does not look at these attempts as compliance.</p> <p>Good faith efforts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An attempted home visit which does not result in face-to-face contact;</li> <li>• A scheduled face-to-face contact at another location when the parent, guardian, custodian or child confirms he/she would be available to meet, but did not show;</li> <li>• Varying times and days for attempted visits based upon the child’s/parent’s school/work schedule;</li> <li>• The agency is required to have face-to-face contact in the child’s home every other month. When three good faith efforts at face to face contact have been attempted during one month without success, the agency is required to have face to face contact in the child’s home the following month.</li> <li>• if conducting visits in the home presents a threat to the safety of the caseworker a written justification to suspend visits in the home shall be documented in the case record. If home visits are suspended, the PCSA shall complete face-to-face contact with the child's parent, guardian, or custodian no less than monthly in a location that assists in ensuring the safety of the caseworker.</li> </ul> <p>Case records shall contain documentation of the agency’s good faith attempts for face to face contact.</p> <p>Case record documentation of attempted visits at times, does not sufficiently demonstrate good faith efforts. It is imperative to be aware of these insufficient attempts as you consider developing agency policy and guidance or plan for your challenging cases. Examples of <b>insufficient</b> attempts at good faith efforts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driving by the home-worker did not knock on the door;</li> <li>• “Seeing” the parent, guardian or custodian face-to-face in the community, but not discussing progress on case plan objectives;</li> <li>• Making all three attempts to visit on the last day or two of the month;</li> <li>• Sending parent(s) three appointment letters and in the absence of a response, not going to the home for the appointment.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to attempt a contact at a variety of times and/or places in consideration of the parent, guardian or custodian’s work schedule.</li> <li>• “Seeing” parent(s) at the children’s visitation, or at court hearings, unless the caseworker meets before or after the visitation/hearing and discuss progress on case plan objectives.</li> <li>• Making attempts to locations where it is known or probable the parent are not at the location, such as an address where the worker was previously informed the family moved.</li> <li>• Invitation to Semi-Annual Review Meeting, Family Team Meetings or scheduled court hearing with no confirmation of attendance.</li> </ul>
Unannounced Visits	<p>Unannounced visits allow for caseworker to further assess changes of behavior in family functioning in their own environment when a family is not expecting a visit. This allows the observation of behavior which is more natural and typical of daily living.</p> <p>It is best practice to incorporate unannounced visits throughout the life of the case. Unannounced visits should occur more often during critical case junctures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During trial home visits</li> <li>• Following Reunification</li> <li>• Prior to case closure</li> <li>• At times of increased levels of risk</li> </ul>