

What is Supervised Visitation?

Supervised visitation is when a parent is only allowed to visit with their child under the supervision of another individual, such as a family member, a Professional Provider or a social worker. The visit may take place at the parent's home or in a designated visitation facility and/or agreed location, a private professional provider's office, such as a child care center.

Judges typically order supervised visitation when the visiting parent's fitness is in question, such as in the event of prior alcohol or substance misuse, or if there have been allegations of abuse or domestic violence.

The purpose of supervised visitation is to ensure that parents have an opportunity to maintain contact and bonds with their children in a structured and monitored environments that is both safe and comfortable for the child, in a controlled environment. Where safety is first and foremost.

The supervised visitation provider is there to make every effort to keep your children safe. The provider may be a family member, a friend, or a paid professional. The provider's job is to make sure that the children and everyone involved in the visits are kept reasonably safe and protected. The provider must be present at all times during the visit, listen to what is being said, and pay close attention to the children's behavior. If necessary, the provider may interrupt or end a visit. All providers are required to report suspected child abuse.

Types of providers:

The law says there are 2 types of supervised visitation providers:

Nonprofessional providers, and Professional providers.

A nonprofessional provider is usually a family member or friend who is not paid for providing the supervised visitation service to you and your family.

Professional providers charge a fee for the service. They are experienced in and trained to provide supervised visitation services. Your court order will usually say which type of provider you have to use to supervise these visits.

How Supervised Visits Work:

Typically, the visiting parent will need to report to the designated visitation center to visit with the child, or the judge will arrange for the child to be delivered to the parent's home. In both cases, the judge will specify who is to supervise the sessions.

Duration of Supervised Visit Orders:

A judge may order supervised visitation temporarily or indefinitely. If there are allegations of abuse or domestic violence, a judge may order that visitation with the accused parent be supervised until the allegations are fully investigated. Judges take allegations of abuse or violence seriously and will investigate these allegations fully.

If a judge has already determined that a parent is not fit for custody, the judge can still allow visitation on an ongoing basis, but require that the visitation is supervised in a controlled setting. In these cases, visitation will remain supervised until the parent can demonstrate that there has been a change in circumstances, such as attendance in a drug rehabilitation program, which impacts the parent's fitness.

Do Visitation Orders Change or Expire?

Once a judge has determined custody and visitation through a court order, the order remains in place until a parent can demonstrate that there has been a change in circumstances. A change in circumstances can be one parent's decision to move, a parent's successful completion of rehabilitation or counseling, or other changes that impact a parent's suitability.

What else should Parents Know?

Parents should understand that supervised visitation is designed to protect the safety of children, while also allowing parents to maintain contact and bonds with their children. If you are a parent whose visitation is supervised, consider how you can demonstrate your fitness to a judge. If the other parent has accused you of abuse or domestic violence, you should cooperate with any investigation ordered by the judge. In addition, if you are a parent who is

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worried about the safety of your child in the presence of the other parent, you should inform the judge of this immediately. If you have an attorney or legal representative, they will guide you through this process and standard procedures.

