

Family Interaction Planning

Focusing on Family Strengths, Relationships, and Progress Toward Reunification

1. Parent engagement and willingness (willing and able): "How are parents actively participating in interaction time, and in what ways are they seeking or making additional opportunities to connect with their child?"

Observation/Example:

- Parents consistently attend scheduled visits and actively engage in activities.
- Parents suggest games, conversations, or routines that support connection.
- Parents express interest in adding extra time or activities to build the relationship, demonstrating commitment and motivation.

2. Parents' progress and caregiving behaviors: "In what ways are parents building skills and showing growth in creating a safe environment for their child during family interactions?"

Observation/example:

- Parents respond attentively to their child's cues and provide guidance that promotes safety and learning.
- Parents are implementing strategies learned in therapy or coaching, showing growth in behavior and confidence.
- During visits, the environment is safe and structured, while allowing the child to explore and interact meaningfully.
- Danger is able to be controlled for during family interactions.

3. Child's expression, connections, and resilience: "How does the child express themselves before, during, and after visits? What positive interactions or connections are observed, and how does the child demonstrate coping or resilience?"

Observation/example:

- Before visits:* The child shows excitement or curiosity about the upcoming time with their parent(s).
- During visits:* The child participates in play, conversation, or routines, demonstrating engagement, sharing, and cooperation.
- After visits:* The child reflects on the experience positively, showing emotional regulation and resilience.
- Overall strengths:* The child actively seeks connection, demonstrates problem-solving skills, and engages in meaningful interactions.

Examples of Positive Interactions or Connections: You might observe the child...

- Initiates contact with the parent through eye contact, conversation, or touch.
- Responds positively to the parent's attention or guidance.
- Engages in shared play or activities while taking turns.
- Uses humor, creativity, or storytelling to connect.
- Seeks comfort appropriately when unsure or upset.
- Demonstrates trust by approaching or leaning into the parent for support.
- Shares experiences or updates from their day/week, showing a desire for connection.

Examples of Coping or Resilience: You might observe the child...

- Transitions smoothly between arrival, interaction, and departure.
- Uses coping strategies such as deep breaths, asking for help, or redirecting attention when frustrated.
- Recovers quickly after moments of upset or disappointment.
- Maintains engagement even when routines change or challenges arise.
- Expresses emotions appropriately (verbalizes feelings rather than withdraws or acts out).
- Demonstrates flexibility or problem-solving (finding a new way to play when something doesn't go as planned).
- Reflects positively on the visit afterward, indicating emotional regulation and understanding.

4. Additional safety supports: *"What supports or strategies could further enhance safety while promoting positive, least-restrictive interactions?"*

Observation/example:

- Case manager to provide more active coaching or reminders during or after visits, and parents are receptive and responsive.
- Parent prepares for the visit (brings needed items, arrives on time, organizes activities) to create structure and reduce stress.
- Parent is actively making progress on case plan goals, showing a desire for lifestyle change.

5. Professional input regarding contact: *"What recommendations from other professionals support safe and meaningful contact for the child and family?"*

Observation/example:

- Other professionals provide guidance focused on enhancing positive interactions, attachment, and communication within the family.
- Therapeutic providers may offer strategies that promote emotional safety, coregulation, or improved parent-child attunement.
- Recommendations are shared collaboratively and center on supporting parent growth, child well-being, and family safety/stability.
- When safety concerns are significant, professionals may recommend limited or structured contact to ensure protection while maintaining focus on long-term relationship building.
- All recommendations are considered in the context of promoting safety, progress, and the least restrictive environment possible.



FAMILY INTERACTION PLANNING GUIDE

THIS TOOL IS DESIGNED TO GUIDE DISCUSSION ABOUT HOW TO MAKE FAMILY INTERACTION AS FREQUENT, NATURAL, AND SUPPORTIVE AS SAFELY POSSIBLE.

	← LEAST RESTRICTIVE		→ MOST RESTRICTIVE		
Frequency	Daily	Multiple scheduled interactions plus natural in-person connection opportunities (appointments, activities, etc.)	Multiple scheduled interactions plus natural connection opportunities (phone calls)	Multiple scheduled interactions	One time weekly
Duration	Weekend/Multiple days	Day, including overnight	Majority of a day	2-4 hours	1 hour
Location	In the parent's home	Caregiver/Provider/Kin home		Community setting	Agency office/Visitation Center
Level of Supervision	Unsupervised	Random check-ins	Caregiver/Provider/Kin monitoring	Staff monitoring on site	Fully supervised by staff