

Parent's Guide to Family Interaction, Connection, and Reunification

This guide helps you understand what caseworkers and the Human Service Zone look for during family interaction time. It focuses on your strengths, your child(ren)'s progress, and ways your family can grow together.

Family interaction time is hopefully not felt to be a moment of judgement, instead rather an opportunity to build connection, show progress, and practice new skills that support reunification, safety, and family well-being.

Parent Engagement and Willingness ("Willing and Able")

What this means: You are showing up, being involved, and creating meaningful moments with your child(ren). You look for ways to connect during visits and beyond.

This might look like:

- You attend visits on time and stay engaged the entire time.
- You bring ideas or activities that help you and your child(ren) bond (games, crafts, books, snacks, etc.).
- You talk, listen, and laugh together.
- You ask for or welcome more time or ways to connect with your child(ren).
- You show flexibility and positivity when plans change.

Ideas for growth and connection:

- Plan a simple activity your child(ren) enjoys each visit.
- Ask your child(ren) about their week and listen closely.
- Praise your child(ren)'s efforts or creativity.
- Keep showing up as we know consistency builds connection.

Building Caregiving Skills and Demonstrating Progress

What this means: You are showing positive parenting behaviors that help your child(ren) feel safe, loved, and supported. You are learning and using new skills to handle challenges and provide structure.

This might look like:

- You stay calm, even when your child(ren) gets upset.
- You guide your child(ren) with care, setting limits while staying kind.
- You use strategies learned in classes or therapy (like deep breaths, giving choices, praising good behavior, setting boundaries, using time-outs if necessary).
- You create a safe and comfortable environment for visits.

Ideas for growth and connection:

- Keep using strategies that work and celebrate your progress.
- Ask for feedback or coaching during visits.
- Think about what helps your child(ren) feel calm and connected.
- Think about what helps you be a more present parent who has the skills to parent your child(ren).

Your Child(ren)'s Expression, Connection, and Resilience

What this means: Your child(ren) shows their feelings and reactions before, during, and after visits. These moments help everyone understand how they are coping and connecting.

This might look like:

- *Before visits:* Your child(ren) is excited or curious to see you.
- *During visits:* Your child(ren) joins in play, talks with you, or seeks affection/reassurance.
- *After visits:* Your child(ren) feels calmer, happier, or talks positively about the time together.

Ideas for growth and connection:

- Notice and praise their efforts ("I love how you shared that toy!" Or "I am so proud of how you did on that test").
- Help them name their feelings ("You seem a little sad, do you want a hug or can we talk about it?").
- Keep routines familiar to help your child(ren) feel safe.

Building Safety and Support Together

What this means: Safety is part of every visit, both emotional and physical. You can work with your team to make sure visits are positive and safe for everyone.

This might look like:

- You bring what your child(ren) needs (snacks, comfort items, supplies) and if need be ask your case manager to assist in getting these items to the visit.
- You use structure by planning activities and transitions.
- You welcome coaching or support from the case manager during or after visits.
- You make progress on goals that support long-term stability.

Ideas for growth and connection:

- Prepare for visits with a small plan for activities or points of conversation.
- Ask your worker what's going well and what you can try next time.
- Stay open to feedback. Even small changes can make big progress.

Team Support and Professional Input

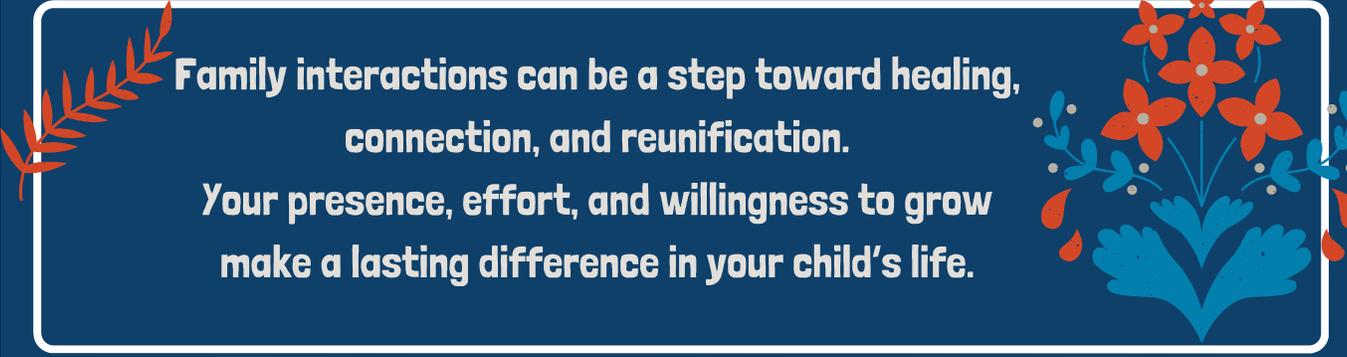
What this means: Remember you are not alone! You have a team that may include your case manager and other supports such as a person to assist you in your mental health, legal matters, family and friends who all want to see your family succeed. Their guidance can help make visits more meaningful and safer.

This might look like:

- Professionals share ideas to strengthen your relationship and communication with your child(ren).
- You use therapy or parenting strategies in visits.
- The team supports your growth, helps identify safety needs, and celebrates your progress.

Ideas for growth and connection:

- Ask for suggestions or feedback after visits.
- Share what's working well for you and your child(ren).
- Be honest in sharing what you feel isn't working so your team can help create a plan to better support you and your family during these interactions.



**Family interactions can be a step toward healing,
connection, and reunification.**

**Your presence, effort, and willingness to grow
make a lasting difference in your child's life.**