

New Hope, Inc.
MJ Leadenham Center
Supervised Family Visitation
91 Prescott Street
Worcester, MA. 01605
(508)753-3146
(508)753-3148 *Fax

Family Visitation Rules and Procedures

All center rules and guidelines are established to provide the utmost safety and security for all parties involved in visitation.

- 1) On the day of the visit, visiting parents **must** arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the visit. Visiting parents will park in the parking lot closest to the Center's entrance and enter through the front door. Visiting parents will also exit the same way they came in. **Failure to arrive on time will result in immediate cancellation of the visit.**
- 2) Custodial parents/guardians must park in the side parking lot to the right of the Center, close to the back entrance and **wait** for the staff to come and get the child(ren). You must leave after your child(ren) is brought back to you. It is imperative that you are prompt for arrival and departure. If you are more than 10 minutes late bringing the child(ren) to the visit, you will be responsible for payment of half of the cost of the visit. Any tardiness in picking up the children will result in a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute for every minute over the expected pick up time. If the custodial parent is more than 15 minutes late, the visit will be cancelled.
- 3) Cancellations **will not** be rescheduled.
- 4) If you are going to be late for a visit or need to cancel a visit for any reason, you must call the Center and notify the staff or leave a message on the center voicemail. **Payment for any cancellation will be the sole responsibility of the party that cancels the visit.**
- 5) If a visiting parent cancels, arrives late for, or fails to show up for any three visits, it may result in suspension or termination of services. Staff will review future use of New Hope Family Visitation Center.
- 6) At visits end, the child or children will leave the center first. The staff will escort the child(ren) out of the center to the custodial parent. The visiting parent will remain in the Center until a staff member indicates that it is appropriate to leave (at least 15 minutes).
- 7) All necessary forms and releases must be signed before visitation can take place.

- 8) Both parties are responsible for payment of a \$50 administrative fee on the day of intake. This fee is non-refundable. The visiting party is responsible for payment of each visit, unless otherwise stipulated in your court order or agreement. This fee is derived from a sliding scale, based on the income of the visiting party. Income verification must be provided at intake. Any fees required must be paid prior to the visit. Also, the center must have a signed payment agreement before you can use the facility.
- 9) No loitering or confrontation of children, former partners, family members etc. will occur in the Center or the immediate vicinity. You are to leave the Center and the vicinity immediately after the waiting time after the visit. If you refuse to leave the premises, the proper authorities, such as the police department, courts and the Department of Children and Families will be notified.
- 10) Visiting adults will be properly clothed at all times. This means no low cut or revealing clothing, shorts, tank tops, mini skirts, tee-shirts with inappropriate pictures or wording, or any other article of clothing deemed inappropriate by staff. Improperly dressed clients will not be allowed to visit with their children.
- 11) There will be no consumption of alcohol or drugs on the premises or prior to the visit. If a staff member detects or suspects the use of alcohol or drugs, the scheduled visit will not take place. Notification will be sent to the Court and /or the Department of Children and Families.
- 12) Possession of any weapon, including mace, pepper gas, pocket knives will terminate the visit. If the visit is terminated due to the possession of any weapons, reinstatement of visitation services will not be permitted.
- 13) All coats, hats, gloves, keys, cell phones, purses and other items brought to the Center must be left in the waiting area. You will not be allowed to carry anything into the visitation room without the approval from your Family Support Worker.
- 14) No one may accompany the visiting parent into the Center for a visit without prior approval from the Center Visitation Director. **No one can remain in the parking area or wait in front of the building, on, or in the general vicinity during your visit with your child(ren).**
- 15) You may not bring anything with you to the visit unless approved by the Center Visitation Director first. This includes, but is not limited to: clothing, games, toys, diaper bags, books, photographs, etc. Presents are allowed on specific gift giving days only. These gifts must be unwrapped and approved by the Center Visitation Director prior to your visit. All gifts will leave the Center with the child.
 - a) There will be no exchange of any material that has not been approved by the Center Visitation Director. For example: no note or card passing, no candy or money is to be given out.

- b) Any gifts or cards from grandparents, siblings and other relatives or friends will not be exchanged at the Center.
- 16) No cameras, video cameras or recording devices are allowed at the visit. This includes cell phones, mp3 players, laptops, Nintendo DS's or any other electronic devices with recording or photographic capabilities. If any photographs are to be taken, they must be pre-approved by the Center Visitation Director and the custodial party.
- 17) All cell phones, beepers and other electronic devices are to be turned off and left in the waiting area upon arrival at the Visitation Center. Visiting parents may not use their cell phones at all during their time at the center. This includes the 15 minute waiting time before and after the visit. Texting, internet surfing, phone calls to attorneys or phone calls for your ride to pick you up are NOT permitted during this time.
- 18) Visiting parents may bring approved food to the visits with them. This includes but is not limited to: beverages (juice or non-caffeinated soda) and/or snacks. Trash items must be cleaned up prior to leaving. There will be a **five** dollar fee applied to your regular fee on your next visit for not cleaning the visiting room once the visit is over.
- 19) A Family Support Worker will be present at all times and will accompany the child to the bathroom if needed. Visiting parents will not accompany children to the bathroom. All diaper changes will be done by the Family Support Worker and the Center reserves the right to ask the visiting parent to stay in the waiting area during diaper changes.
- 20) **Please cooperate and engage** in any activity the Family Support Worker initiates as it will be beneficial to you and your child(ren) and the success of the visit.
- 21) There will be no provoking, fighting with, swearing at, or physically disciplining the child(ren). If this behavior occurs, the visit will end and you will be asked to leave and escorted out of the Center immediately. All proper authorities will be notified.
- 22) No derogatory remarks about the custodial parent, foster parent, and/or guardian will be allowed. Questioning or talking about the child(ren)'s custodial family members, school, residence, their friends, court cases, counseling, etc. will result in immediate intervention by the Family Support Worker.
- 23) Derogatory comments made about non-custodial (visiting) parents **will not be allowed**.
- 24) Any harassment, threats, intimidation, assault, attempted assault, reckless endangerment, engagement in conduct which is offensive or disorderly toward and individual, adult or child in the Center or in the immediate vicinity of the Center, will result in immediate termination of the visit. Notification of the proper authorities such as police department, the courts and the Department of Children and Families will follow immediately thereafter.

- 25) Any additional inappropriate behavior will be documented and reported to the proper authorities.
- 26) Court cases may **not** be discussed at the visit with the child(ren) and/or Family Support Worker even if the child(ren) initiates the conversation.
- 27) Promises and/or talk of future visits will not be allowed.
- 28) There will be no discussion by visiting parents about past visitations, your family members, your counseling or friends during the visit.
- 29) The Family Support Worker may pass medical information regarding the children in writing to the non-custodial (visiting) parent. Any other communication between parents must be done through the Department of Children and Families, respective attorneys or the court system.
- 30) No foreign language will be spoken at the Center. The only exception to this rule would be if staff is fluent in that particular language.
- 31) No whispering or low tone talking will be allowed.
- 32) Physical contact will only be initiated by the child and deemed appropriate by the Family Support Worker.
- 33) Additional rules and guidelines discussed at intake, with your DCF Social Worker and/or via court order must be adhered to.
- 34) The Center will not make any exceptions to the rules and regulations. Special requests must be made through the Visitation Director **prior** to visitation only.
- 35) It is up to the Family Support Worker to terminate visits if any of the rules are not followed. The Visitation Director will determine if services will be terminated indefinitely.
- 36) No further visits will be arranged once services have been terminated. If the visitation is arranged through the Department of Children and Families, a meeting with your DCF Social Worker and the Center staff will take place. A Court Order and approval by the Center is necessary for *the possibility* of reinstatement occurring.

