



Nurturing Connections Program

Our Role

The Nurturing Connections Program will be staffed, minimally, by two individuals at all times. All program staff will be trained in policies and practices of the program, as well as recognition of child abuse and CPR. Our program will:

- Remain a neutral third party in all communications and interactions.
- Ensure a safe and comfortable atmosphere.
- Work to meet the needs of each parent and child.
- Treat the parent(s) and child(ren) with the utmost respect and dignity.
- Keep each case confidential.
- Provide activities for the families to utilize during visits.
- Provide a pleasant, welcoming, and homelike setting for visits.
- Provide services for families requiring weekly visits for a period not extending over a year. Families requiring bi-weekly visits may use services for a period not exceeding two years.

All staff of the program are expected to maintain a professional demeanor while supervising. Conversations with families or other workers should be limited to professional issues or casual conversation. If a staff member has a relationship with a family outside of the program, supervision of the visits of the family may be recommended/required for outside referral.

No personal information will be given to anyone about the other party involved in the visits or exchanges. Phone numbers should not be dialed in front of another party, etc. The use of audio and visual recording is prohibited in the center, unless explicit permission is given by program staff.

Visitation and exchange reports are based on observable behavior during the visit and scheduling/cancellation issues. The program does not make recommendations to the court regarding custody or future visitation. However, observation reports may be utilized as part of the court's assessment when determining future visitation. Communications between staff and program families is not considered privileged information and may be disclosed, as necessary, in court.

By signing this document, it is agreed that documented observations and communications will be shared with relevant case workers, lawyers, judges, etc.

The Intake Process

The program staff will meet with both parties; custodial and non-custodial individually. Initial visit includes

completion of intake paperwork, creation of goals, evaluation of situation, planning of parent education activities, and provide a copy of the most recent court order, as well as Orders of Protection and other pertinent information. Once the intake is complete and necessary paperwork is provided, visitation will be scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Your Role & Visitation Details

- If an individual other than the custodial party is to pick up the child(ren), this must be provided in person, in writing by the custodial party. In case of emergency, only authorized individuals listed as emergency contacts will be able to pick up the child(ren).
- The non-custodial party will arrive 15 minutes prior to the visit. If the non-custodial party is late, the custodial party will be asked to stay 15 minutes beyond the visitation start time. However, both parties should notify the program staff as soon as possible if you cannot attend a scheduled visitation. If the non-custodial party has not arrived at this time, the visit will be cancelled. In most circumstances, these visits are not able to be rescheduled within our program.
- No one except approved visitors will be admitted to the visitation center during hours of operation. Parties will contact the law guardian or case worker for approval of additional visitors. Individuals dropping off a child for a visit or exchange must leave immediately. When orders of protection are in place, both parties will be responsible for themselves in ensuring any relevant orders are followed. Program staff are not responsible for any adult's behavior but will implement emergency protocol when necessary.
- No one will be allowed to visit with a child if their behavior suggests they cannot provide a safe environment; for example, carrying weapons, intoxication and/or threatening behavior are grounds for immediate termination of the visit or exchange. By signing, it is agreed that visits may be cancelled if there is a suspicion that alcohol or other substances have been used.
- The program staff will monitor situations and interactions. If necessary, emergency protocol will be implemented, which may include contacting local law enforcement.
- Gifts from the visiting party are not allowed for sex offenders or in cases involving sexual abuse, a request must be submitted in advance, court order may limit. Otherwise, gifts may be brought for birthdays and other special holidays, as approved by the program staff.
- Photos taken or brought by the visiting party are not allowed for sex offenders or in cases involving sexual abuse, a request must be submitted in advance, court order may limit. Otherwise, photos may be taken by the visiting party occasionally or as approved by the program staff.
- It is recommended that the child initiate physical contact with the visiting party.
- The visiting parent is permitted to bring food, with supervision by program staff.
- Both parties agree to:
 - Refrain from following or harassing another party before or after a scheduled visit.
 - Follow the Nonnie Hood PRC Sick Policy.
 - Refrain from speaking negatively about the other party in front of the child(ren).
 - Refrain from discussing adult issues.
 - Refrain from making promises to the child(ren) about future living arrangements.
 - Refrain from sending correspondence or messages by means or the child(ren). There should be

no written communication sent between parents and children.

- Refrain from using physical punishment or threatening to use physical punishment with the child(ren) during the visit.

Fees

- All relevant fees must be paid before the visits can be scheduled. It is recommended that family court determine how the fee should be paid; whether it is the custodial parent's responsibility, non-custodial parent's responsibility, or both contributing a portion. If both parties are instructed to contribute towards the fee, each party will be assessed for eligibility separately for the reduced fee.
- If the court system does not specify, the Nonnie Hood Parent Resource Center has a default guideline that the non-custodial party will pay.
- With proper documentation provided, a parent deemed to be at the 100% poverty level or below is given a 90% discount, based on current Health & Human Services Poverty Guidelines. They will pay \$10. Parents deemed to be at the 200% poverty level or below will be assessed a 50% discount and will pay \$50. The maximum fee is \$100. Other hardships may be taken into consideration and should be discussed with program staff.
- The initial fee includes up to three months of supervised visitation. After the three months, a reevaluation will be completed and a new fee will be assessed for the following three months.

Ongoing Evaluations

- At the initial intake, a parent education plan will be created. This may look different for various individuals, with other court requirements taken into consideration.
 - During the first three months of enrollment, a parent will be required to take a parent education class. If a parent is involved in other education that is considered beneficial to parenting, these classes may count at the program staff's discretion.
- Every three months, the Supervised Visitation Coordinator will meet with the visiting party for a brief check-in on the status of visits, if there is any feedback, etc. During these check-ins:
 - The parent education plan created at the intake will be re-evaluated.
 - The visiting parent will be asked to give feedback on the visitation program and space.
 - Staff will give their feedback on the status of visits.

Cancellations

- Cancellations due to weather: The PRC follows the direction of the Corning-Painted Post Central School District, regarding closings due to inclement weather. For our program, if there is a school closing in CPP district, visitations will be cancelled. If there is a two-hour delay, visits will happen as scheduled. If visits are cancelled due to inclement weather, there will not be an opportunity for a make-up visit and a rotating schedule will resume as scheduled, if applicable. During school holidays and on Saturdays, please check WENY, WETM TV, or the PRC Facebook page for potential closings. Additionally, visitations will be cancelled if there is a State of Emergency issued.
- If a cancellation is necessary due to other unforeseen events, the program staff will contact families

with as much notice as possible and/or closures will be broadcast via local news.

- Supervised visitation staff reserve the right to cancel and reevaluate visits if a child(ren)'s actions pose a threat to the safety of families and/or staff of the PRC.

Program Termination

The following may result in immediate suspension or termination from the program:

- Cancelling, being late to, or otherwise not attending two or more visits.
- Failure to complete required parent education class within three months.
- Failure to abide by the agreed upon rules.

Documentation from a doctor, court, or other pertinent information explaining the absence/tardiness from scheduled visits or classes will be taken into consideration. Final decisions regarding suspension or termination will be made by the Supervised Visitation Coordinator. Parties may apply for readmittance to the program by submitting a reinstatement application three months after termination.