

# Visitation Support Tips

## *Helping Foster Children Navigate Family Visits*

Family visitation is an important part of the foster care journey. Visits with biological parents or family members help maintain connections and support reunification whenever possible. While visits can be meaningful, they can also bring strong emotions for children. This guide offers practical tips for helping children prepare for visits, process emotions, and feel supported before and after family time.

### **Before the Visit: Preparing the Child**

- Explain the visit in simple and reassuring language.
- Remind the child where they will be going and when they will return.
- Allow the child to ask questions and share feelings.
- Maintain calm and predictable routines leading up to the visit.
- Send comfort items if appropriate, such as a favorite toy or drawing.

### **During the Visit: Supporting the Experience**

- Keep a calm and positive attitude about the visit.
- Avoid speaking negatively about biological family members.
- Reassure the child that it is okay to love and miss their family.
- Trust caseworkers and visitation supervisors to guide the visit.
- Pray quietly for peace and comfort for everyone involved.

### **After the Visit: Helping Children Process**

- Expect a wide range of emotions after visits.
- Allow the child time to decompress or rest.
- Offer reassurance and patience if behavior changes.
- Provide opportunities to talk about the visit if the child is ready.
- Return to normal routines to help restore a sense of stability.

### **Trauma-Informed Considerations**

- Understand that visits can trigger past memories or fears.
- Behavior changes after visits are often expressions of emotion, not defiance.
- Focus on connection and reassurance rather than punishment.
- Remain patient and calm while helping children regulate emotions.

## **Faith-Based Encouragement**

For Christian foster families, visitation can also be a time of prayer and trust. Many children in care deeply love their biological families, and supporting those relationships can be part of God's work of restoration. Foster parents can model grace, patience, and compassion while trusting that God is at work in every part of the child's story.

- Romans 12:18 — 'If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.'
- Colossians 3:12 — 'Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.'
- Psalm 34:18 — 'The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.'

## **Encouragement for Foster Parents**

Supporting visitation can sometimes be emotionally challenging for foster families. Remember that your role provides stability and compassion during an uncertain time in a child's life. By helping children navigate visits with patience, understanding, and grace, you are contributing to their healing and sense of belonging.