

## Supervised Contact

All children are different, and there are no hard and fast rules for dealing with them. There are some things which lots of people find it useful to know. It won't tell you everything, but might be a start. If you think of other things other people might like to know, please tell us so we can add to the list.

- **Be on time for contact.** One of the things social services are looking for is how committed you are to the contact and being on time helps to show this.
- **Go to all the contact you are offered.** If you have a really good reason to miss contact, let the contact centre and social worker know as soon as you can. If you miss sessions, you might be asked to phone every time before contact so the contact worker doesn't bring the child to contact and you are not there. If you miss too many sessions, social services might cut them down or stop them altogether.
- **Listen to the contact worker.** They will write down what happens in contact and sometimes will show you things you can do with your children or make suggestions how to deal with them.
- **Don't argue with the contact worker in front of the children.** This is upsetting for children and you will be criticised for it. If you disagree, say so politely but try to talk about it outside the contact session – after all, its time for you with the children, not to argue with someone else!
- **Think about taking a water or another healthy drink and healthy snack with you** – this is showing that you have planned for the contact. Think about the time of day – lots of children are hungry after school and would be glad to have a healthy snack or sandwich. Don't take loads of crisps and sweets because this is your chance to demonstrate you can give the children a healthy, balanced diet.
- **Think about what you are going to do in contact** - contact often goes better when you have planned activities. This does not mean that the children don't get a say – but if they get bored or disruptive and you have one or two different ideas, this will help keep the children calm and focused.
- **Remember you might not be allowed to take photos** - different centres have different rules. If you can take photos, make sure that the session is not just about you taking photos of the children but is also about you spending time with them.
- **Switch off your phone** – for the same reason. If you don't have much time with the children, then concentrate on them in the session and take phone calls later.
- **Take it at the children's pace** – especially if they haven't seen you for a while or have had to move away from their home. Try and judge from the children whether they want hugs and kisses and take it at their pace.
- **Read and fill in the contact book** – if there is one, it should let you know how the children have been and help you communicate with their carers.