



## What is supervised visitation, how does it work?

The White Earth Dove Program is now providing Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange services to families with incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault, or child abuse. Even after separating from an abusive partner, victims still experience ongoing threats and acts of violence that are usually stemmed from issues with joint children.

Offenders typically use visitation arrangements as an opportunity to inflict more abuse or violence onto their partners. It is ideal for any person who has experienced any type of abuse to seek supervised visitation and/or safe exchange services. So what is the difference between supervised visitation and safe exchange?

Supervised visitation is when the non-custodial parent has contact or parenting time with their child in the presence of a neutral third party. The neutral third party is present to observe the parenting time and to ensure the child's safety. Safe exchange occurs when the custodial parent brings the child to the visitation center and visitation staff will escort the child to the non-custodial parent who is waiting in a different area. The parents have absolutely no contact with each other during the exchange. Safe exchange typically occurs when non-custodial parents have parenting time that doesn't have to be supervised and the times are usually 24 hours or more.

It is important for children to have a healthy relationship with both parents. Both parents need to remember that when using supervised visitation and safe exchange services. It is the responsibility of both parents to follow the policies of the visitation center to ensure the child has a safe and positive experience during the visit. Children are often caught in the middle of the abuse and are traumatically affected by it. If you are a visiting parent, here are some tips to follow to ensure your parenting time is successful.

- Keep to the scheduled visits, cancel for emergencies only.
- Make sure you arrive on time to your scheduled visit.
- Use your scheduled time to focus on your child. Don't ask questions about the other parent or bring up topics regarding legal issues.
- Have a plan for what you want to do during your visit.
- Bring games, books, or activities that you would like to do with your child during your visit.
- Never make a promise to your child that you cannot keep.
- Do not make negative comments about the other parent or the visitation center.
- Follow the policies of the visitation center and be respectful.
- Enjoy your parenting time with your child!

Keep in mind that the visitation center is a neutral place. The center's number one priority is to ensure the safety of the child and custodial parent. The center has certain policies and procedures in place to ensure safety and security for families utilizing their services. If you are a custodial parent using visitation or safe exchange services, here are some helpful tips for you to follow.

- Keep to the scheduled visits, cancel for emergencies only. If an emergency occurs, be willing to reschedule a visit.
- Arrive on time to your scheduled visit or exchange.
- Let your child know about the visit in advance and help them prepare. It helps for younger children to mark the visit on the calendar.
- Have a positive attitude toward the visit; demonstrate to your child that you want them to have the visit with the other parent.
- Don't talk negative about the other parent or the visitation center.
- Avoid exposing your child to conflicts between you and the other parent.
- Do not pump your child for information after the visit takes place. Listen to what your child offers to tell you. If you have concerns regarding the visit, talk to the visitation supervisor.
- Follow the center's policies and procedures.

All children have the right to have a healthy relationship with both parents. In some cases supervised visitation or safe exchange is required for contact between a parent and their child to occur. The DOVE Program is now offering Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange services to families. If you have any questions regarding these services, please contact Neily or Tanya, DOVE Program, at 218-935-5554 or 1-800-763-8629.