

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR  
BAY AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

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**LETTER OF AGREEMENT**

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**LETTER OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN KIDS COUNT VISITATION PROGRAM  
AND THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

This Letter of Agreement outlines specific criteria to be used by the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, and Kids Count Visitation Program.

These criteria are necessary to protect all families referred to Kids Count visitation program, as well as staff, volunteers, and the surrounding community.

**THE COURT AGREES TO THE FOLLOWING:**

1. To ensure that referrals are appropriate for the level of services available in a program.
2. To work with staff of Kids Count visitation program to establish policies and guidelines to protect all families referred to supervised visitation. The court acknowledges that cases involving domestic violence and /or child sexual abuse require special precautions and staff training.
3. To authorize Kids Count staff to accept or decline court referrals. Programs shall decline to accept a case for which they cannot reasonably ensure the safety of all clients, program staff, and volunteers, including but limited to the following reasons:
  - a. The volatile nature of the case or client.
  - b. Visitation personnel are not adequately trained to manage issues identified in the intake.
  - c. Facilities are not adequate to provide the necessary level of security.
  - d. Insufficient resources.
  - e. Conflict of interest.

4. To establish a timely mechanism for review of cases referred to Kids Count visitation program. This might include a provision that each case be reviewed after a certain number of visits, or weeks, or months. For example:

The court will schedule each case for a review hearing to check on the status of the case every four months.

5. To establish protocols for appropriate communication between the court and the visitation program. For example:

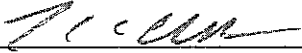
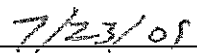
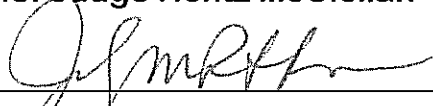
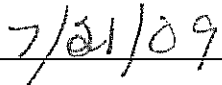
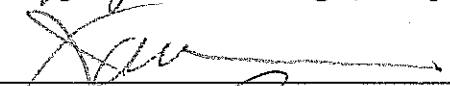
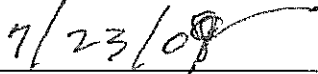

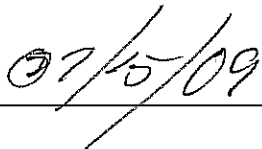
The program shall provide copies of all critical incidents directly to the judge's assistant on bright paper and provide a copy to the Clerk of Court for filling in the court file.

6. To pay any services needed to accommodate a family's language barriers or special needs, including sign language interpreters, foreign language interpreters, etc.

Kids Count visitation program agrees to the following:

1. To ensure that all staff who monitor visits have specific training in child development, child abuse indicators, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, mental health, substances abuse, parental alienation, cultural diversity and crisis intervention consistent with training from the Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation and documented in personnel files.
2. To accept only those case referrals for which staff have the requisite case background material, training, and security in place to safely monitor contact.
3. To decline any referrals of cases when staff lack necessary training or education, when background material has not been received, or where lack of appropriate security may allow re-victimization of child.
4. To establish guidelines for staff to utilize in all cases, including specific guidelines for use in cases involving domestic violence and child sexual abuse. All guidelines should be pre-approved by the courts.
5. To develop policies for handling and reporting of critical incidents.

6. To suspend visits in cases when the child appears to be traumatized by the visit, or when the visiting parent engages in appropriate behavior or violates program rules.

 _____ Chief Judge Hentz McClellan	 _____ 7/23/08 Date
 _____ Family Law Adm. Judge, Judy M. Pittman	 _____ 7/21/09 Date
 _____ Trial Court Adm., Jan Shadburn	 _____ 7/23/08 Date
 _____ Program Director, Charles Lance	 _____ 7/15/09 Date