

## The Separation/Divorce Resource Centre Inc.

### **Rules and Regulations/Policy and Procedures for Supervised Access**

The Separation/Divorce Resource Centre Inc. supervised access service is a child focused service. If THE SDRC INC. staff witness abuse or neglect while providing service to a family we will make a report to The Children's Aid Society.

**Supervised Access: \$40.00/hr for supervision. There is a \$120.00 intake fee (one time only) that is to be shared equally by each parent (\$60.00 each).**

In contracting our services both the custodial and access parent agree not to involve THE SDRC INC. staff in court proceedings concerning custody and access. THE SDRC INC. will not become entangled in adversarial court issues.

Both the custodial and access parent are required to attend an in office interview/intake (separately) to establish visit guidelines before a visit can be arranged. The custodial and access parent maybe referred to mediation if consensus concerning visits cannot be reached.

The ability of The SDRC INC. to provide this service depends on the cooperation of all parties involved. The SDRC INC. supervised access is a private service. The focus of our service is to provide safe and enjoyable visit for children. Custodial parents must understand that they will not be allowed to observe the supervised visit, nor will they give the supervised access worker directions concerning how to conduct/supervise the visit. Custodial parents will not be allowed to stay in the The SDRC INC. office during a supervised access. Once the child/children have entered the visit room the safety and well-being of the child/children is the responsibility of the visit supervisor. Visit supervisors will not end visits unless the child clearly demonstrates ongoing distress during the visit. The visit supervisor will give the child the time and opportunity to overcome their distress before the visit will end. After visit guidelines are set the The SDRC INC. will not allow either the custodial or access parent to make arbitrary changes to the visit guidelines.

The SDRC INC. staff does not allow outside third party visitors or observers to attend a supervised access unless approved by The SDRC Program Coordinator.

The SDRC INC. staff will decline all requests to forward any documents or messages between the access and custodial parent. The SDRC INC. staff are not mediators or counsellors and do not involve themselves in communication or disputes between parents.

All referral are carefully screened for appropriateness to ensure a safe and enjoyable visit for access parent and child/children. **The SDRC INC. reserves the right to decline or end service at any time.**

**Visit Guidelines:** Visit guidelines are set based on the information submitted by both parents in their intake forms and standard rules set by The SDRC INC. These guidelines are set to ensure a safe and enjoyable visit for parent and child/children. The SDRC INC. supervised access workers have been trained to end a visit if the access parent is not following the visit guidelines.

- The custodial parent will drop the child/children off at the The SDRC INC. office at the designated time for the visit and then will leave the The SDRC INC. office.
- The custodial parent will return at the designated time to pick up the child/children at the end of the visit.
- The custodial parent will remain available to pick the child/children up if a visit needs to end early. The Custodial party will be responsible for providing staff with two telephone numbers and addresses of trusted people who can be contacted in case of emergency if the custodial parent is not immediately available.
- The custodial parent will inform/prepare the child/children about the supervised visit prior to the visit occurring. Part of these preparations includes reassuring the child/children that a visit supervisor will be with them in the visit room at all times to ensure their safety and well-being. The custodial parent should describe the supervised access in a positive way and encourage child/children to enjoy their time spent with the access parent.
- The access parent will not be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol during the supervised access.
- No weapons of any kind will be allowed during the supervised access.
- The access parent will not engage in any discussion concerning custody or access with child/children during the supervised access.
- The access parent will not ask children for any information concerning custodial parent during the visit.
- The access parent will not engage in any negative talk with child/children concerning custodial parent during the supervised access.
- The custodial parent will not engage in any negative talk with the child/children concerning the access parent before or after the supervised access.
- The access parent will not bring guests to the supervised visit unless the visitor is approved by The SDRC Inc. Supervised Access Program Coordinator.
- The access parent will not ask the children to have a phone conversation or Skype an individual unless prior consent has been given by the The SDRC Inc. Supervised Access Program Coordinator.

- The supervised visit worker will end a visit immediately if the child/children are placed in physical danger during the visit.
- If the child/children appear to be in emotional distress during the visit the supervised access worker has been trained to make the access parent aware of this distress and to redirect conversation and interactions to help ease this distress. If the access parent does not follow this direction, the access worker will end the visit.
- Supervised visit workers will encourage parent/child interaction during a visit. THE SDRC INC. staff will encourage parents to meet child's needs during a visit.
- Both parties (custodial and access parent) contract with THE SDRC INC. for our services and because of this visits are not confidential to the access parent. Both parties contracting with THE SDRC INC. will be kept informed about visits.
- All other guides are unique to individual contracts based on intake forms submitted by both the access and custodial parent.

**Arrival and Departure:** All parties are to arrive at and depart from the centre at precisely the prearranged times. The Access party is to arrive at least fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled time of the visit and the Custodial party is to arrive at the exact scheduled time of the visit. At the end of the visit the Custodial party is to pick up the child/children at the exact time that the visit is to conclude and leave the Centre promptly. Fifteen minutes later the Access party is to leave the Centre

**Confidentiality:** Confidentiality means keeping in strict confidence all information obtained by the agency about a program participant. Staff members will keep in strict confidence all private or confidential information about program participants. Parents are to respect the confidentiality of all participants in the program. See the Consent for Services form for limitations of confidentiality.

**Assigned rooms:** The child and visiting party are assigned a visit area. Parents and children are not to be wandering to other rooms or be in the hallway.

**Aggression/Bullying:** THE SDRC INC. has zero tolerance for bullying or intimidating behavior by either the custodial or access parent. We reserve the right to refuse service, at any time, if such behavior occurs. If the Visit Supervisor or Program Coordinator believes that bullying or intimidating behavior has occurred during a visit, the visit will be terminated immediately. If necessary, the access worker will call police/emergency services if the access parent refuses to follow direction concerning ending visits.

**Visit Availability:** The ability of THE SDRC INC. to provide supervised access depends on the availability of our supervised access workers and the availability of our rooms.

**Languages:** THE SDRC INC. will attempt to provide a language appropriate visit but we are limited to the Visit Supervisors available. The SDRC INC. reserves the right to limit the language of the visit to English. This is to ensure that there is no manipulation to the child or negative language being used and that the Visit Supervisor understands what is being said at all times.

**Cancellation/no show:** THE SDRC INC. will charge \$25.00 for a visit that has been cancelled without 24 hours' notice. Weekend visit must be cancelled by the Friday prior to the visit for no charges to be applied. THE SDRC INC. does not refund payment if a visit is ended early. THE SDRC INC. requires 24 hours' notice for visit cancellations or visit charges will be applied.

**Lateness:** The Child will be required to wait fifteen minutes for a scheduled visit or exchange, after that time the custodial party will be called to pick up the child(ren) and the visit will be recorded as a, "no show". If a party continues to arrive consistently late, the access at The SDRC Inc. program may be discontinued.

**Ill children:** THE SDRC INC. requests that custodial parents not bring ill children to a supervised access (fever, vomiting, and diarrhea). THE SDRC INC. will end the visit if the child is ill and in discomfort.

**Right to Terminate:** The SDRC INC. staff reserves the rights to terminate a visit at any time and for any reason they see fit. Should a visit be terminated, the staff is required to place a note in the file as to the reasoning for the termination. These notes will accompany the observation notes should they be requested.

**Observation Notes:** If visit notes have been requested they will be provided to both the custodial and access parent. THE SDRC INC. will not provide visit notes if they have not been requested. Should observation notes be requested there will be a \$25.00 fee charged to the requesting party.

**Child Refusal:** The SDRC Inc. assists in the facilitation of visits but is not an enforcement agency. All children will be encouraged to participate in the program and adhere to court orders; however, no child will ever be forced into a visit.

**Picture/Video taking:** Visiting parties may take photos and videos during the access visit so long as it has been approved by the Supervised Access Program Coordinator and is not otherwise banned by a court order. All pictures and video will be reviewed by the Visit Supervisor and approved prior to the end of the visit. The SDRC INC. staff have the right to demand that a photo or video be deleted at their discretion.

**Cell Phones and Tablets:** The Visiting party able to use their cell phone and/or tablet during the visit; however, The SDRC INC. staff may ask the visiting party to stop the use of the phone and/or tablet at their discretion if they feel that it is not being used appropriately.

**Washroom Policy:** If a child requires assistance, the visiting party will assist the child under staff supervision unless otherwise stated in the court order.

**Toys:** Parties are expected to provide their own toys and crafts. No war toys will be allowed at the centre; this includes but is not limited to water guns.

**Infant Care:** The Custodial party is responsible for supplying clothing, formula, bottles, or whatever else is needed for good care of a baby during a visit. A well-known stuffed toy or blanket can be sent with the child to facilitate his/her emotional comfort while at the centre. In the summer months a hat and sun screen are also requested.

**Mealtime visits:** When visits are scheduled over mealtimes, the visiting party is responsible for supplying nutritious meals for the child(ren). A microwave and refrigerator is available for use.

**Accountability:** Policy regarding general non-compliance with policies, procedures and guidelines:

**#1.** Parent will be reminded of the program rules.

**#2.** A verbal warning will be given stating that if non-compliance continues the visit or exchange will end.

**#3.** If non-compliance continues, the visitation will end immediately. The participant will receive written incident report, as well as a verbal and written report warning that visits/exchanges will be terminated at the next incidence of non-compliance. The other parties and respective lawyers will receive copies of the letter.

**#4.** If non-compliance continues, the participant is notified that visits or exchanges are formally suspended or terminated. The other party and respective lawyers will receive notification.

**\*\*Please note that custodial and non-custodial parents are allowed to bring toys and activities for the visit but all items will be searched through prior to the visit.**

**Disclaimer**

I understand that the SDRC INC. staff cannot and will not be involved in any court proceedings due to their involvement with the Supervised Access of The SDRC INC. clients. In addition I am aware that observation notes – notes taken during each individual visit- can be released to the parties should they be requested by the parties themselves or the parties’ lawyers.

I also understand that The SDRC Inc. is not a nut free facility and it is my responsibility to inform the Staff member in charge of my case of any allergies or difficulties associated with this.

Name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the rules, regulations, and guidelines presented in this document. I agreed to adhere to all rules, regulations, and guidelines as set forth. I understand that if these rules, regulations, and guidelines are not followed visitation will be terminated without notice either temporarily or permanently based on the case.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_