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**Minnesota Standards for
Professional and Nonprofessional
Parenting Time Supervisors
in Family Court Proceedings**

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**Prepared by the State Court Administrator’s Office
ADVISORY WORKGROUP ON STANDARDS FOR PARENTING TIME SUPERVISORS**

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Statutory Authority for Court-Ordered Parenting Time

[Minn. Stat. § 518.175, subd. 1\(a\)](#), authorizes courts to order parenting time, including supervised parenting time, as follows:

In all proceedings for dissolution or legal separation, subsequent to the commencement of the proceeding and continuing thereafter during the minority of the child, the court shall, upon the request of either parent, grant such parenting time on behalf of the child and a parent as will enable the child and the parent to maintain a child to parent relationship that will be in the best interests of the child.

If the court finds, after a hearing, that parenting time with a parent is likely to endanger the child's physical or emotional health or impair the child's emotional development, the court shall restrict parenting time with that parent as to time, place, duration, or supervision and may deny parenting time entirely, as the circumstances warrant. The court shall consider the age of the child and the child's relationship with the parent prior to the commencement of the proceeding.

Directive to Develop Supervised Parenting Time Standards

[Minn. Stat. § 518.175, subd. 1a\(b\)](#), states that “[t]he state court administrator, in consultation with representatives of parents and other interested persons, shall develop standards to be met by persons who are responsible for supervising parenting time. Either parent may challenge the appropriateness of an individual chosen by the court to supervise parenting time.” The standards are applicable only in family court proceedings.¹

Effective Date

The Standards for Professional and Nonprofessional Parenting Time Supervisors are effective _____.

¹ The legislation directing establishment of these standards applies solely to parenting time for parents and legal custodians in family court proceedings, not to visitation in juvenile protection proceedings. At the court's discretion or upon the parties' agreement, these standards may be applied to other family court visitation situations (e.g., third-party visitation).

SECTION 2: STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO ALL SUPERVISORS

Standard 1: Applicability of Standards; Local Court Practice

- 149
150
151 (A) These standards establish the minimum requirements, including duties and obligations,
152 for persons who supervise parenting time in family court proceedings.
153
154 (B) These standards, unless otherwise specified, apply to all supervisors of parenting time in
155 family court proceedings, whether the supervisor is a friend, relative, paid independent
156 contractor, employee, intern, or volunteer and whether the supervisor is operating
157 independently or through a supervised parenting time center or agency.
158
159 (C) Each court is encouraged to adopt local practices necessary to implement these standards.
160
161

Standard 2: Definitions

- 162
163
164 (A) **Child** is a minor between the ages of birth and 18.
165
166 (B) **Contact** is interaction between a supervised parent and one or more children. In the
167 order, the court should determine whether the contact may be in person, by mail, e-mail,
168 telephone, video conference, social media, or other means of communication.
169
170 (C) **Critical incident** is an occurrence that threatens the safety of, or results in injury to, a
171 child or adult and/or that requires the intervention of a third party such as the police or
172 child protection services.
173
174 (D) **Domestic abuse**, as defined in [Minn. Stat. § 518B.01](#), means the following, if
175 committed against a family or household member² by a family or household
176 member:
177 (1) physical harm, bodily injury, or assault;
178 (2) the infliction of fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, or assault;
179 (3) terroristic threats ([Minn. Stat. § 609.713, subd. 1](#));
180 (4) criminal sexual conduct ([Minn. Stat. § 609.342](#), [609.343](#), [609.344](#), [609.345](#),
181 or [609.3451](#)); or
182 (5) interference with an emergency call ([Minn. Stat. § 609.78, subd. 2](#).)
183 See also “domestic violence.”

² Pursuant to [Minn. Stat. § 518B.01, subd. 1\(b\)](#), “family or household members” means:

- (1) spouses and former spouses;
- (2) parents and children;
- (3) persons related by blood;
- (4) persons who are presently residing together or who have resided together in the past;
- (5) persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they have been married or have lived together at any time;
- (6) a man and woman if the woman is pregnant and the man is alleged to be the father, regardless of whether they have been married or have lived together at any time; and
- (7) persons involved in a significant romantic or sexual relationship.

SECTION 2: STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO ALL SUPERVISORS

- 184 (E) **Domestic violence** is any form of physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or economic abuse
185 inflicted on any person in a household by a family or household member or by persons
186 who are presently residing together or who have resided together in the past. In this
187 context, “domestic violence” may mean, but is not to be limited to, the definition of
188 domestic violence set forth in [Minn. Stat. § 518B](#) or to the existence of an Order for
189 Protection or Harassment Restraining Order. See also “domestic abuse.”
190
- 191 (F) **Exchange** means the transfer of the child between the parents. Exchanges may be
192 supervised or monitored. See Standard 4(C).
193
- 194 (G) **Monitored** means the supervisor is nearby to intervene as necessary, but is not
195 necessarily present at all times to see and hear the contact between the child and parents.
196 See Standard 4.
197
- 198 (H) **Neutral**, as used in the context of these standards, means maintaining an unbiased,
199 objective, and balanced environment, and not taking a position between the parents when
200 supervising parenting time.
201
- 202 (I) **Nonprofessional supervisor** is any person who is not paid for providing supervised
203 parenting time services.
204
- 205 (J) **Nonsupervised parent** is a parent who has temporary or permanent physical custody of a
206 child and whose contact with that child is not supervised.
207
- 208 (K) **Off-site supervision** is supervision of contact that occurs away from a facility that is
209 under the management of a professional supervisor.
210
- 211 (L) **On-site supervision** is supervision of contact at a facility that is under the management
212 of a professional supervisor.
213
- 214 (M) **Parent** refers to a mother or a father. “Parent” also refers to an adult with legal custody
215 of the child or the child’s legal guardian. See also “supervised parent” and
216 “nonsupervised parent.”
217
- 218 (N) **Parenting time** is contact that may be supervised or monitored. See Standard 4(A).
219
- 220 (O) **Professional supervisor** is any person paid for providing supervised parenting time
221 services, or an independent contractor, employee, intern, or volunteer operating
222 independently or through a supervised parenting time center or agency.
223
- 224 (P) **Safety** is protection from danger or risk of physical, psychological, or emotional injury.
225
- 226 (Q) **Supervised** means the supervisor at all times sees and hears the contact between the child
227 and supervised parent and at no time is the child left alone with the supervised parent.
228
229

SECTION 2: STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO ALL SUPERVISORS

- 230 (R) **Supervised parent** is a parent who has supervised contact with a child.
231
232 (S) **Supervised parenting time** describes contact between a supervised parent and one or
233 more children. Parenting time may be supervised or monitored. See Standard 4(A).
234
235 (T) **Supervisor** is any individual, center, or facility that monitors or supervises parenting
236 time or exchanges.
237
238 (U) **Therapeutic supervisor** is a licensed mental health professional paid for providing
239 supervised parenting time services, including a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a clinical
240 social worker, a marriage and family counselor, or an intern working under direct
241 supervision of a qualified licensed mental health professional.
242
243

Standard 3: Supervisor Role and Responsibilities

- 244
245
246 (A) In each case, the role and responsibility of the parenting time supervisor are left to the
247 discretion of the judicial officer. When appointing a parenting time supervisor, the
248 judicial officer is encouraged to consider including the following language in the order:
249
250 “The role of the supervisor is to:
251 • promote the safety and welfare of the child; and
252 • help the child have safe parental contact consistent with the court order.”
253
254 (B) The supervisor shall not act as an investigator or evaluator of the quality of parenting
255 time.
256
257 (C) The responsibilities of the supervisor are described throughout these standards.
258
259

Standard 4: Levels of Supervision

260
261
262 When ordering parenting time pursuant to [Minn. Stat. § 518.175, subd. 1\(a\)](#), judicial officers are
263 encouraged to use the following terms.
264

- 265 (A) **Supervised Parenting Time**
266
267 (1) **One-on-One Supervised Parenting Time** is supervision of contact in which the
268 supervisor maintains continuous, in-person audio and visual supervision of the
269 contact. The supervisor shall never leave the child alone with the supervised
270 parent for any portion of the contact.
271
272 (2) **Group Supervised Parenting Time** is supervision of contact in which more than
273 one family is supervised simultaneously by one or more supervisors. All families
274 and the supervisor shall remain together in one room or other space. The
275 supervisor(s) shall be available to provide immediate intervention when

SECTION 2: STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO ALL SUPERVISORS

276 necessary, but is not required to provide continuous audio and visual supervision.
277 The supervisor(s) shall never leave the children alone with the supervised parents
278 for any portion of the contact.
279

280 (B) **Monitored Parenting Time** is contact in which a parent and child are supervised for part
281 of the time and purposefully left unattended by the supervisor for specified periods of
282 time. The supervisor shall observe the initial and final interactions between the parent
283 and child and at varying times throughout the contact.
284

285 (C) **Exchanges**

286
287 (1) **Supervised Exchange** is the transfer of the child from one parent to the other
288 with a supervisor who is present at all times and who will intervene when
289 necessary. The arrival and departure times of the parents shall be staggered and
290 the parents shall have no contact with each other, unless otherwise ordered by the
291 court.
292

293 (2) **Monitored Exchange** is the transfer of the child from one parent to the other with
294 a supervisor who is nearby at all times and who shall intervene when necessary.
295 The arrival and departure times of the parents may be staggered and the parents
296 may have contact with each other, unless otherwise ordered by the court.
297
298

Standard 5: Minimum Qualifications – All Supervisors

300
301 (A) Unless otherwise ordered by the court or agreed upon by the parties, every supervisor
302 shall:

- 303 (1) be 18 years of age or older;
304 (2) have no record of conviction for any crimes listed in [Minn. Stat. § 518.179](#),³

³ Minn. Stat. § 518.179 lists the following crimes or similar crimes under the laws of the United States or any other state:

- (1) murder in the first, second, or third degree under [Minn. Stat. § 609.185](#), [609.19](#), or [609.195](#);
- (2) manslaughter in the first degree under [Minn. Stat. § 609.20](#);
- (3) assault in the first, second, or third degree under [Minn. Stat. § 609.221](#), [609.222](#), or [609.223](#);
- (4) kidnapping under [Minn. Stat. § 609.25](#);
- (5) depriving another of custodial or parental rights under [Minn. Stat. § 609.26](#);
- (6) soliciting, inducing, promoting, or receiving profit derived from prostitution involving a minor under [Minn. Stat. § 609.322](#);
- (7) criminal sexual conduct in the first degree under [Minn. Stat. § 609.342](#);
- (8) criminal sexual conduct in the second degree under [Minn. Stat. § 609.343](#);
- (9) criminal sexual conduct in the third degree under [Minn. Stat. § 609.344](#), subd. 1(c), (f), or (g);
- (10) solicitation of a child to engage in sexual conduct under [Minn. Stat. § 609.352](#);
- (11) incest under [Minn. Stat. § 609.365](#);
- (12) malicious punishment of a child under [Minn. Stat. § 609.377](#);

SECTION 2: STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO ALL SUPERVISORS

- 305 (3) have no record of adjudication for child abuse or neglect;
306 (4) have no current or past court order in which the supervisor is the person being
307 supervised;
308 (5) have a valid driver's license and proof of automobile insurance, if transporting the
309 child;
310 (6) have no conflict of interest under Standard 9;
311 (7) be able to speak the language of the child and the supervised parent; and, if the
312 supervisor does not speak the language of the child and supervised parent, the
313 court should address the issue;
314 (8) agree to adhere to and enforce the court order regarding supervised parenting
315 time; and
316 (9) comply with all other applicable standards set forth in this document, unless
317 otherwise ordered by the court.
318
319 (B) Professional and therapeutic supervisors should see Standard 10 for additional minimum
320 qualification requirements.
321
322

Standard 6: Safety and Security Procedures – All Supervisors

- 324
325 (A) A safe and secure physical space is a vital component of supervised parenting time. All
326 parenting time supervisors shall:
327 (1) make every reasonable effort to ensure the safety and welfare of the child, the
328 parents, and themselves during the parenting time;
329 (2) suspend or terminate a supervised parenting time session as specified in Standard
330 8.
331 (3) promptly notify the parties in writing if the supervisor decides to withdraw from
332 further service as a parenting time supervisor.
333
334 (B) Professional and therapeutic supervisors should see Standard 11 for additional safety and
335 security requirements.
336
337

Standard 7: Safety Considerations for Sexual Abuse Cases – All Supervisors

- 338
339
340 (A) In cases where sexual abuse has been substantiated and supervised parenting time has
341 been ordered, unless otherwise ordered by the court the supervisor shall not allow:
342 (1) exchanges of gifts, money, or cards;
343 (2) photographing, audiotaping, or videotaping of the child;
344 (3) physical contact with the child, such as lap sitting, hair combing, stroking,
345 holding, prolonged hugging, wrestling, tickling, horseplaying, changing diapers,
346 or accompanying the child to the bathroom;

-
- (13) neglect of a child under [Minn. Stat. § 609.378](#);
(14) terroristic threats under [Minn. Stat. § 609.713](#); or
(15) felony stalking under [Minn. Stat. § 609.749, subd. 4](#).

SECTION 2: STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO ALL SUPERVISORS

- 347 (4) whispering, passing notes, hand signals, or body signals; and
348 (5) supervised parenting time in the location where the alleged sexual abuse occurred.
349
350 (B) In cases where sexual abuse has been alleged but not yet substantiated and supervised
351 parenting time has been ordered, the court should consider the applicability of the above
352 restrictions, or others, if any.
353
354

Standard 8: Temporary Suspension or Termination of Supervised Parenting – All Supervisors

355
356
357
358 If a supervisor determines that the rules of the parenting time session have been violated; the
359 child has become acutely distressed; or the safety of the child, a parent, or the supervisor is at
360 risk, the supervisor may temporarily interrupt the parenting time, reschedule the parenting time
361 for a later date, or terminate the parenting time.
362
363

Standard 9: Conflict of Interest – All Supervisors

- 364
365
366 (A) One responsibility of the supervisor is to ensure the safety of the child and parents. This
367 responsibility supersedes any relationship the supervisor may have with one or both
368 parents. The supervisor must be aware of why supervision is ordered and have the
369 willingness and ability to intervene in the event of a critical incident. This includes
370 remaining neutral and may include reporting suspected child abuse to the appropriate law
371 enforcement or child protection agency.
372
373 (B) Neutral, as used in the context of these standards, means maintaining an unbiased,
374 objective, and balanced environment, and not taking a position between the parents when
375 supervising parenting time. Supervising parenting time in a neutral manner is intended to
376 ensure respect for all individuals in their capacity as parents and to protect children who
377 are attempting to remain in contact with their parents. Being neutral does not mean
378 supervisors disregard safety issues, abuse, or violence of any kind.
379
380 (C) Professional and therapeutic supervisors should see Standard 12 for additional conflict of
381 interest requirements.

SECTION 3: STANDARDS APPLICABLE ONLY TO PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISORS

Standard 10: Minimum Qualifications – Additional Requirements for Professional and Therapeutic Supervisors

Unless otherwise ordered by the court or agreed upon by the parties, in addition to the minimum qualifications specified in Standard 5, every professional or therapeutic supervisor shall have no civil, criminal, or juvenile restraining order within 10 years prior to appointment in each case.

Standard 11: Safety and Security Procedures – Additional Requirements for Professional and Therapeutic Supervisors

In addition to the safety and security requirements specified in Standard 7, professional and therapeutic parenting time supervisors shall also establish:

- (1) a written protocol that describes the emergency assistance and responses that can be expected from the local law enforcement agency;
- (2) written security procedures and inform the parties of these procedures before the commencement of supervised parenting time;
- (3) written policies and procedures for situations in which a child refuses to participate in parenting time;
- (4) written safety and emergency procedures to protect the child, parents, and supervisor that must be followed during supervised parenting time, including:
 - (a) the process of terminating visits when program rules have been violated and safety is in jeopardy;
 - (b) the procedures for informing all staff, including security officers, of protective orders;
 - (c) arrival and departure protocols that minimize the risk of contact between nonsupervised and supervised parents (e.g., arranging for the nonsupervised parent to drop off the child 15 minutes before the supervised parent arrives and requiring the supervised parent to stay at the program site for 15 minutes after the nonsupervised parent and child leave);
 - (d) a physical layout that keeps the nonsupervised parent and supervised parent separate (i.e., different entrances and waiting rooms for nonsupervised and supervised parents);
 - (e) a plan for weapon screening (ideally using metal detectors) and disarmament of parents;
 - (f) a protocol for consistent monitoring of the security system, facility, and grounds for safety risks; and
 - (g) protocols that maintain confidentiality for the nonsupervised parent and child – including addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, schools, and workplaces.

SECTION 3: STANDARDS APPLICABLE ONLY TO PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISORS

Standard 12: Conflict of Interest – Additional Requirements for Professional and Therapeutic Supervisors

In addition to the conflict of interests requirements specified in Standard 9, professional or therapeutic supervisors shall:

- (1) be alert to, avoid, notify of, and take reasonable steps to resolve potential conflicts of interest; in some cases, protecting a child’s or parent’s interests may require not accepting or terminating a supervised parenting time role;
- (2) not be financially dependent on either parent (this does not include charging a parenting time fee);
- (3) not be an employee or employer of either parent;
- (4) not be in an intimate relationship with either parent; and
- (5) not engage in dual or multiple relationships with a child or parent in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the child or parent. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, a supervisor shall notify all those involved in the supervised parenting time of the dual or multiple relationship, take appropriate steps to protect the child or parent, and set clear and culturally sensitive boundaries for proceeding from that point. Dual or multiple relationships occur when a supervisor relates to a parent or child in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.⁴

Standard 13: Training Requirements – Professional and Therapeutic Supervisors

Every individual professional and therapeutic supervisor, or every agency on behalf of its supervisors, shall upon request of the court or a party provide a sworn affidavit stating that all persons providing supervision have successfully completed training regarding the following topics within five years prior to appointment in each case:

- (1) The content of these standards;
- (2) Appropriate techniques for intervening in, suspending, or terminating a parenting time or exchange session;
- (3) First aid and CPR;
- (4) Child abuse reporting laws;
- (5) Developmental needs of children;
- (6) Protocols for children who refuse to participate in parenting time;
- (7) Cultural and diversity sensitivity;
- (8) Implicit bias;
- (9) Issues relating to chemical health, mental health, child abuse, sexual abuse;
- (10) The dynamics of domestic violence;

⁴ A simultaneous or consecutive relationship can occur, for example, when a supervised parenting time center is also a facility that serves as a domestic violence advocacy group or shelter. This can result in a conflict. Strict adherence to conflict rules may eliminate availability of parenting time supervisors in many communities. This standard is intended to balance the need for supervision and recognition of the existence of dual relationships.

SECTION 3: STANDARDS APPLICABLE ONLY TO PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISORS

- 467 (11) The impact of domestic violence on children; and
468 (12) The potential use of parenting time as a forum for continuing abuse.

Standard 14: Intake and Screening Process – Professional and Therapeutic Supervisors

- 471
472
473 (A) Professional and therapeutic supervisors shall conduct an intake and screening to assess
474 the nature and degree of risk for each case.
475
476 (B) The procedures for intake and screening shall include separate interviews with the parents
477 before the first parenting time or exchange session. If the child is of sufficient age and
478 capacity, the supervisor may include the child in all or part of the intake and screening
479 process. Any discussion with the child shall be in a manner appropriate to the child's age
480 and developmental stage.
481
482 (C) During the intake and screening process, the supervisor shall:
483 (1) obtain identifying information regarding the child and parents;
484 (2) obtain emergency and alternative contact information for the parents;
485 (3) obtain information regarding the child's health needs, if the child has a chronic
486 health or other medical condition;
487 (4) obtain:
488 (a) copies of any protective order(s); and
489 (b) copies of current court orders, including the order establishing parenting
490 time; and
491 (5) explain the reasons or circumstances that may result in intervention, suspension,
492 or termination of a parenting time or exchange session.
493
494

Standard 15: Ratio of Children – Professional and Therapeutic Supervisors

- 495
496
497 The ratio of children to a professional supervisor should be contingent on the:
498 (1) degree of risk factors present in each case;
499 (2) nature of supervision required in each case;
500 (3) number and ages of the children to be supervised during a parenting time session;
501 (4) number of people visiting the child during the parenting time session;
502 (5) duration and location of the parenting time session; and
503 (6) experience of the supervisor.
504
505

Standard 16: Maintenance and Disclosure of Records – Professional and Therapeutic Supervisors

- 506
507
508
509 Professional and therapeutic supervisors shall keep a written record for each case which shall
510 include the following:
511 (1) a record of each contact, including the date, time, and duration of the contact;
512 (2) who attended the parenting time;

SECTION 3: STANDARDS APPLICABLE ONLY TO PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISORS

- 513 (3) actions taken by the supervisor, including any interruptions, terminations of a parenting
514 time, and reasons for these actions;
515 (4) an account of any critical incidents, including physical or verbal altercations and threats;
516 (5) violations of protective orders or parenting time orders; and
517 (6) any incidence of abuse as required by law.
518
519

Standard 17: Confidentiality Requirements – Professional and Therapeutic Supervisors

- 521
522 (A) Communications between parties and supervisors of supervised parenting time are not
523 protected by any privilege of confidentiality.
524
525 (B) The psychotherapist-patient privilege does not apply during therapeutic supervision.
526
527 (C) Professional and therapeutic supervisors shall maintain confidentiality regarding the case,
528 except when:
529 (1) ordered by the court (a subpoena does not constitute a court order for this
530 purpose);
531 (2) both parents have signed written releases;
532 (3) requested to provide information about the case by an evaluator or guardian ad
533 litem in conjunction with a court-ordered evaluation or investigation;
534 (4) required to provide information about the case by child protective services;
535 (5) requested to provide information about the case by law enforcement as authorized
536 by law; or
537 (6) otherwise authorized by law.
538
539 (D) Unless otherwise ordered by the court, any identifying information about the parents and
540 child, including, but not limited to, addresses, telephone numbers, places of employment,
541 and schools, is confidential, shall not be disclosed, and shall be deleted from documents
542 before releasing them to any court, attorney, child’s attorney and/or guardian ad litem,
543 party, evaluator, mental health professional, social worker, or referring agency, except as
544 required in reporting suspected child abuse.