

Shared Parenting

For the parent: The goal of Shared Parenting is the parent resumption of the parent role—while in visitation, while in activities, while providing nurture and guidance, while in clinical interventions. Shared Parenting is about encouraging, enabling and empowering parents of children in care to remain active in the role of parent, albeit the obvious limitations of the child living away. The parent needs to participate in whatever aspects of parenting can be made available reasonably and with safety considered.

For the child: The “shared” part of this term relates to the reality that the child will be experiencing parenting from both the parent and the caregiver. The “sharing” is more about the child and less about the parent in partnership with someone else.

For the Caseworker: The first task of Shared Parenting is encouraging, enabling and empowering the parent to assume parent role immediately. Clearly, the intended goal is to identify, and as necessary, create opportunities for the parent and child to stay connected—not merely in a social environment, but in the context of situations, in which the parent is expected to perform parent duties, participate in family activities and in ways the parent can nurture, guide, educate, direct, protect and provide.

For the Agency: The agency needs to ensure that parents have reasonable opportunity and ready access to provide parenting for their child. This may include the need for supportive policies, reasonable access to resources and negotiations with the various court members to encourage timely and safe progression in frequency, duration, location and complexities for parent opportunities.

For the Caregiver: While the cooperation and support of a caregiver is invaluable, Shared parenting, as an intervention, does not require that the caregiver agree to the participation of the parent or that the parent and caregiver do the activities. Shared Parenting as a planned intervention starts prior to the involvement of the caregiver with the parent assuming appropriate tasks during the early phase of case intervention. Only later does the interaction between the parent and the caregiver come into play.