**Section 301.220 Sibling Visitation**

a) The Department or purchase of service agency shall schedule and provide visits among all siblings in substitute care who are placed apart at least twice per month, beginning as soon as possible, but not later than two weeks, after the Department is awarded temporary custody of any sibling, unless:

1) a court has ordered that sibling visits occur less frequently or not at all; or

2) one sibling may physically, mentally or emotionally harm another during the visit, and supervision would be inadequate to eliminate the risk of that harm as determined by prior observation or documentation of sibling interaction as recorded in the child's case file. The specific risk and the basis for assessing that risk shall be documented in the child's case file.

b) Neither the Department nor its contractual agencies shall withhold or reduce nor seek to have a court withhold or reduce the frequency of visits based on the unavailability of a supervisor for the visits or as a form of discipline.

c) A Visitation and Contact Plan, specifying the frequency of sibling visits and other approved forms of contact, shall be developed by the siblings' caseworkers, foster parents, and the children/siblings and filed with the juvenile court within 10 days after award of temporary custody of the siblings. The Visitation and Contact Plan shall be included in the Family Service Plan.

d) The Visitation and Contact Plan may be included as a part of and implemented in coordination with a plan for parent-child visits. The frequency of sibling visitation shall in no way be affected by the failure of any parent to visit his or her children for any reason.

e) A sibling visit can be scheduled to occur simultaneously with parent-child visitation, but the sibling visit will be deemed to have occurred only if all siblings are present at the parent-child visit.

f) The Visitation and Contact Plan shall specify the duration of sibling visits and shall also include the location and supervision to be provided for visits. A brief statement of the reasons for selecting the frequency and duration of sibling visits as specified in the visitation plan shall also be recorded in the plan.

g) After completion of each child's Individualized Assessment, the caseworker shall review the Visitation and Contact Plan to ensure the plan addresses the individualized needs of each child. The Visitation and Contact Plan shall be reviewed on an ongoing basis to determine whether it is possible to allow increased contact and visitation among the siblings. Any time contact and visitation can be increased, the caseworker should ensure it is done. Caregivers should be encouraged to allow siblings to visit each other at holidays, milestones (e.g., birthdays, graduations), etc. Holidays should include nationally recognized holidays as well as holidays recognized by the culture of the family of origin.

h) The Visitation and Contact Plan should be amended every time a sibling moves and as necessary to meet the needs of the children.

(Source: Amended at 40 Ill. Reg. 666, effective December 31, 2015)