

Sexual Offender Family Reunification Protocol

1. Initial visits between the child and the offender are held in the victim's therapist's office.
2. The next visits take place outside the therapist's office and are arranged with family members and a chaperone.

Typical rules for these visits include:

- The offender will never be alone with the victim.
 - The visit will be chaperoned by an adult who is knowledgeable about the sexual abuse and who is comfortable with the "chaperone" role; often the non-offending parent acts as the chaperone.
 - The offender will not be responsible for disciplining the victim.
 - The offender will refrain from any physical affection towards the victim.
 - The offender will have no secrets with the victim.
 - The offender will not be involved in any physical hygiene (i.e. taking the child to the rest room).
 - The offender will not talk about the victim's dating, boyfriends, sexuality, etc. with the victim.
 - Discussions of the sexual abuse will occur only in the therapist's office.
 - Any other rules necessary to help the child feel safe and comfortable.
3. Semi-private visits with family members in the homes of relatives or friends are the next step. The above rules are in effect.
 4. Home visits take place next only when several "semi-private" visits have been successfully completed, when issues arising during the visits have been resolved, and when all family members, especially the victim, are comfortable with the idea. In addition to the previously mentioned rules, the offender must agree to, and understand the necessity of the following rules:
 - The offender should not enter children's bedrooms.
 - The offender should not be in any bedroom or bathroom with any child.
 - Family members should lock the bathroom door (except toddlers, who may require assistance.)
 - A chaperone should always be in the home when the children are there.
 - The offender and all family members should be appropriately dressed at all times.
 - There will be no drug or alcohol use during visits.

5. Overnight visits occur after several extended visits have gone well. The following rules should be followed to avoid potential problems and so everyone knows what to expect during the visit:
 - Locks should be placed on bedroom and bathroom doors to assure privacy. Locks should not be put on the doors when quick entry needs to be assured for safety reasons
 - The offender should be fully clothed at all times, except when he is in his bedroom or bathroom.
 - The offender should not be outside of his bedroom after his wife/girlfriend/parent has retired to the bedroom, or before they come out of the bedroom in the morning.
 - If he needs to leave the bedroom during the night he should awaken his wife/girlfriend/parent and inform her of what he is doing.

The family members should discuss the visits, and issues that arise during the visits with their respective therapists. This is another period of testing family dynamics, routines, and interactions for family members.
6. Overnight visits should be gradually increased in frequency, until finally, a weekend visit is held. All rules stay in effect.