

## **ABSENT PARENT REUNIFICATION/GRADUATED SCHEDULE**

In some juvenile court cases, the parents and child have not been living together as a family unit. The court, based on a number of factors, may conclude that it is in the child's best interest to give the reuniting parent the opportunity to develop or re-develop a relationship with the child before exercising overnights. This graduated parenting schedule will enhance the comfort level for the parents as well as the child.

Because the intent of the graduated visitation schedule is to allow the child to become familiar and comfortable with the reuniting parent, it is important that he/she exercise substantially all of the scheduled time in consecutive weeks. If the reuniting parent misses a visit, he/she will not move to the next level until all the visits in the current level are completed. Should the reuniting parent miss 2 or more visits after week 4, he/she shall return to week 3 and begin again from there.

This graduated parenting schedule may be ordered by the court under facts which indicate it will be in the child's best interests. Some factors the court will consider include, but are not limited to:

1. Whether the parents ever lived together as a family unit, before or after the birth of the child;
2. The length of time the parents resided together;
3. The age of the child;
4. The living arrangements of the absent parent;
5. The length of the relationship between the parents;
6. Any of the child's special needs or medical concerns.

The parents will discuss the pertinent schedules and work together to determine when the visits will occur. In the event the parents cannot agree, the visits shall occur on Sundays beginning at noon for weeks 1-8.

The guideline graduated parenting time/absent parent reunification schedule is as follows:

**Weeks 1 and 2** the reuniting parent shall have two hours with the child. Depending on the situation, the visits may be at a relative's home or public place.

**Weeks 3 and 4** the reuniting parent shall have four hours with the child within Miami County.

**Weeks 5, 6, 7, and 8** the reuniting parent shall have six hours with the child without restriction to Miami County.

**Weeks 9, 10, 11, and 12** the reuniting parent shall have one weekend overnight each week. The parties are to agree on the day. If they cannot agree, the overnight shall begin at 6:00p.m. on Saturday through 6:00p.m. on Sunday.

Once the child has had 4 overnights with the reuniting parent, the parties shall observe the Juvenile Court Model Parenting Time Standard Weekend option unless a different model parenting time option is agreed upon by the parties.