



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 5180:2-9-16 Visiting and communications.

Effective: August 13, 2026

(A) What is a residential facility to do regarding visitation and communication?

A residential facility is to develop procedures to ensure that arrangements for visitation and communication between the child and family, including siblings, or friends are consistent with the family case plan and that such arrangements are documented in the service plan.

(B) Can a child in a residential facility send and receive mail?

A residential facility is to allow a child to send and receive mail subject only to the residential facility's rules regarding contraband and directives from the child's legal custodian when such rules and directives do not conflict with federal postal regulations.

(C) Can staff open or read a child's mail?

A residential facility is not to open or read a child's mail unless specified in the child's family case plan and/or service plan and approved by the child's custodian.

(D) What happens if staff suspect contraband in the mail?

A residential facility may require the child to open mail in front of a staff person if contraband is suspected and empty the package or envelope.

(E) Can a child in a residential facility have phone access?

A residential facility is to, in accordance with the service plan, allow a child access to a telephone which will permit the child to make and receive calls with appropriate privacy.

(F) How quickly can a child contact essential individuals after a request?

(1) Within twenty-four hours of requesting, a child is allowed to privately contact their:

- (a) Attorney.
- (b) Caseworker or custodial agency worker.
- (c) Probation officer.
- (d) Court-appointed special advocate (CASA).
- (e) Guardian ad litem (GAL).
- (f) Youth ombudsman office.



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- (2) If a child has a disability, the child is to have the opportunity to contact the state protection and advocacy organization, in accordance with section 5123.60 of the Revised Code. Staff are to ensure the child receives any necessary assistance or accommodation to facilitate this contact.

(G) Is a residential facility to provide private spaces for visits?

A residential facility must provide a private space that has a door and can be used for confidential conversations, phone calls, and visits. This area is to be separate from any area where children sleep or live.

(H) How is electronic communication to be handled?

A residential facility is to ensure that a child who has access to electronic media within or outside of the facility while under the supervision of agency staff, which may include internet, cell phones and e-mail service, adheres to the agency's policy regarding communications.