

FAMILY VISITATION CENTER



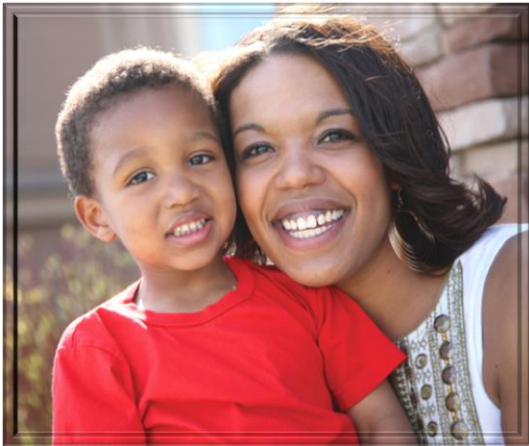
by Claire Erny, Communications & Marketing Intern

Parents and children at The Children’s Home Family Visitation Center, at 5014 Madison Road, can maintain the life-essential bond between parent and child by using specialized services provided at the Family Visitation Center.



Dr. Joseph Rieman, medical director at The Children’s Home reminds us on the importance of the relationship between a parent and their child.

“The relationship between a parent and their child is a very unique bond that nurtures the physical, emotional and social development of a child. Children who have a healthy relationship/bond with their parents are more likely to have secure bonds and friendships with other people around them,” said Dr. Rieman.



Dr. Rieman continued, “Children, who have not only a positive relationship with their parents, but a secure relationship as well, learn essential skills and values that set these children up for future success. A child who has a healthy relationship with their parent(s) will learn to regulate their emotions under stressful and difficult situations.”

The Family Visitation Center (FVC) is a collaboration between the Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court, Hamilton County Juvenile Court and The Children's Home. The FVC provides a location where children are able to spend time with their parents in a safe, nurturing environment.



“A healthy parent-child relationship is essential for teenagers being able to successfully navigate the challenges of adolescence. Teens who have negative, conflictual relationships with their parents are at risk for developing depression, anxiety and mood regulation problems. These problems, if not treated successfully, can



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potentially result in a spectrum of undesirable outcomes including under-achievement in school, failed relationships with friends, difficulty getting and holding jobs, as well as increasing engagement in risky and unsafe behaviors,” says Dr. Philip K. Lichtenstein, associate medical director at The Children’s Home.



The FVC offers areas for parents to do homework, watch movies, or play with their children. A playground and a basketball court are also on the campus.

Parents are able to utilize the FVC when a judge or magistrate orders supervised parenting time. Once an order and payment, if necessary, are received, the Hamilton County Juvenile Court will schedule the visits at the FVC.



Karen McCann, family visitation supervisor, recalled some heartwarming memories.

“We have one client, a girl who always takes something from dad, like his hat, proclaiming she wants dad to forget something, so he will stay longer,” said McCann.

During a parent orientation at a client's initial visit, a visiting parent turned to an FVC staff person and remarked, “I understand now, my children are more important than anything else, including my addiction,” KMcCann said.



During visits, FVC's staff will be available to support and connect families, as needed, to community mental and behavioral health resources. A Cincinnati police officer will also be on the premises.





Parents and their children have celebrated birthdays, Father’s Day and many other holidays, with the appropriate themed baked goods and ice cream along with singing from FVC staff and families.

McCann recalled a time where “one day a visiting child had an exciting idea. She was practically jumping up and down and vibrating as she was asking FVC staff to join her, her siblings and father for a ‘puppet show.’ The children designed all the puppets, and arranged the room; chairs for the audience, a stage, and mood lightening. When the time arrived, the audience filed into the classroom. A cell phone was used to shine a spotlight on the puppeteers. Each child took their turn on the makeshift stage. At the end, after clapping loudly, the audience was informed there would be future performances, with newly designed puppets. Looking back, it was realized, this was the first official ‘FVC Puppet Show!’”



McCann remembered a first visit with a mother and her children.

“During a first visit, a mom shared she believed her children would be very nervous about coming to the FVC for the first time. She went on to explain the children are shy, and would likely be overwhelmed with seeing her in this new place. However, both children appeared very at ease, engaged with mom and the toys. In fact, the little girls stated, ‘I like it here, I want to stay a long time.’”

