



“Visiting the Contact Centre”

Inside cover:

Often adults and children feel a mix of emotions when they start to use the Contact Centre. This book has been designed to help your family to work through those feelings and put together a plan to make sure you have the best possible time.

Sometimes, all the members of a family don't live together in the same home. The important people in our lives can live in different homes. And although you live in different places, and may not see each other often, the love your family has for you, never goes away. Sometimes, things make it hard for the people who love us to spend time with us.

But there is a special place, called the Children's Contact Centre. The contact centre is a safe place where the adults in your life feel OK about you spending time with each other. There are special workers to help make it easy, they work hard to make time together fun and safe for kids. There are toys and games to play with. Sometimes children stay and play at the centre. This is called a visit. And other children go there when they are changing from spending time with one person to another. This is called a change over.

Many different families visit the Contact Centre. Children may visit with Mum, Dad, Grandparents or other people who care about them or miss them. You may not have seen this person for some time

and you may be worried about seeing them again. There are special workers at the Contact Centre who are there to make sure you are Ok, during the visit you can talk to them about how you feel and what you need.

It can be helpful to think about the things you will need to do to get ready for your visit? Do you need to eat a healthy breakfast? Brush teeth? Pick out clothes and get dressed? Pack special things you want to take?

You might like to think of some things that you want to remember to talk about or games or toys you would like to play with while you are at the visit. Maybe you could make a list. This can help if you think you might be nervous, especially if you haven't seen each other for a while.

When you get to the Contact Centre and ring the door bell, the special worker will meet you and bring you in to have a look around. They will show you where you can put your stuff, where the toilets are and talk to you about what toys and games you would like to play with during the visit.

Sometimes it can be really exciting visiting at the centre. Sometimes children feel sad when saying goodbye to the person they live with. If you feel sad, remember they will be back soon. You can tell the worker if you need help or comfort. They have ideas and games to help you feel good and have as much fun as possible!

Hopefully you will have lots of fun during your visit. You will know it is time for the visit to end when the doorbell rings again. The worker will help you pack up and remember all your things.

Sometimes children feel sad when saying goodbye to the person they've been visiting. It's OK to feel sad, sometimes a hug can help, and thinking about all the things you can do together at the next visit. You will say 'see you next time', and the worker will take you through to meet the person you live with.

If you are still feeling worried about the contact centre, there are some things that you can do that may help:

- Take a virtual tour of the centre you'll be visiting
- Give the centre a call and talk to a special worker
- Pack special items to make you feel safe, like your favourite toy
- Playing games on the way to the centre, such as "I-spy" or having a sing along to your favourite music

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS YOU FEEL SAFE AND HAVE FUN SPENDING TIME WITH THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE