

*Hours of Operation for  
Visitation/Exchange  
services:*

*Friday: 4:30 pm –8:30 pm*

*Saturday: 7:30 am– 6:00 pm*

*Sunday: 9:00 am–6:00 pm*

Gateway Shelby County  
Safe Havens  
333 Business Circle  
Pelham, Al 35124

205-510-2780 Main  
205-510-2792—Safe Havens  
Project Manager

Please call to schedule an intake  
or to learn more about the  
program.

**MISSION:**

“Our mission is to provide a safe location in Shelby County where family members who have experienced domestic violence may safely exchange children for supervised visitation in a structured environment, with respectful consideration for all.”

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

**Principle I - Equal Regard for the Safety of Child/ren and Adult Victims**

**Principle II - Valuing Multiculturalism and Diversity**

**Principle III - Incorporating an Understanding of Domestic Violence into Center Services**

**Principle IV - Respectful and Fair Interaction**

**Principle V - Community Collaboration**

**Principle VI - Advocacy for Child/ren and Adult Victims**



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**GATEWAY  
SHELBY  
COUNTY  
SAFE HAVENS**

**SUPERVISED  
VISITATION  
AND SAFE  
EXCHANGE**





# Questions Parents Ask

## What is Supervised Visitation?

Supervised Visitation is a structured setting where children and the non-custodial parent have the opportunity to spend time together in a comfortable environment, but in the presence of a trained, unbiased third person who will discreetly observe the visit to ensure safety and compliance.

## What is Supervised Safe Exchange?

Supervised Safe Exchanges refers to the safe transfer of the child to the non-custodial parent overseen by a trained, unbiased third person. After transfer, unsupervised visits take place off-site and the child returns at a later time to the center for supervised transfer back to the custodial parent. Measures are taken to ensure the parents never have contact.

## What is the Purpose?

Both Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchanges are designed to ensure that children can have safe contact with a non-custodial parent without having to be put in the middle of conflict. Keeping adults and children safe are paramount in making any decision regarding the need for supervision. It is a tool that can help families as they go through difficult and/or transitional times. Benefits for the family are as follows:

### For the children:

- It allows the children to maintain a relationship with both of their parents, something that is generally found to be an important factor in the positive adjustment to family dissolution.
- It allows them to anticipate the visits without stress and enjoy time with the non-custodial parent in a safe, comfortable environment.

### For the custodial parents:

- It allows for no communication or contact between the custodial and non-custodial parent. Arrangements and scheduling are made by a neutral party at the visitation center and there is no parental interaction before, during, or after the visits. Heightened levels of safety and security are in place.
- It allows for relaxation and sense of comfort allowing children to have contact with the other parent with the knowledge they are being supervised or exchanged in a secure and monitored location.

### For the non-custodial parents:

- It allows for assurances that contact with children does not have to be interrupted regardless of any interpersonal issues that may be happening with the custodial parent.
- If allegations have been made, which is often the case when supervision is ordered, fear from further accusations are eliminated with the presence of a trained, unbiased third party, who can verify what transpired in the visit.

## SCHEDULING VISITS

Once you have been referred for Supervised Visitation or Exchange, parents are responsible for contacting the Center within 5 business days of the order or referral for Supervised Visitation or Exchange to schedule an intake. The Project Manager can be reached at 205-510-2780. Individualized intakes are scheduled for the custodial and non—custodial parent. Staff will coordinate with the custodial and non—custodial parent to find a time for visitation or exchange services that works best for everyone. Once agreement is reached, all parties will have an orientation and tour of the facility.

## SUCCESSFUL VISITS

At orientation, parents are provided with information and suggestions for making supervised visitation successful. This is an opportunity to ask questions and gain further understanding. The Parent Handbook provides guidelines that should be followed for success in the program. Custodial parents can help children have a successful experience in supervised visitation by encouraging them and staying positive. Non-custodial parents should arrive anticipating quality time with their children and comply with Safe Havens supervised visitation and exchange guidelines. Neither parent should ask the child (ren) for information about the other parent.