**POLICY AREA**

**Visitation in Residential Facilities**

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It is the policy of The Arc of Putnam County to maintain an open door policy in all its residential facilities to allow free access to all visitors, based on the preferences of each individual resident.

**ISSUE**

It is an essential quality of any home setting that the resident can entertain visits from people s/he chooses to see at times determined by the resident.

**POSITION**

**To assure that residents of Arc/Putnam homes are able to entertain visits from friends, family, and service providers at times of their choosing, all agency facilities will comply with the following:**

1. **No residential facility will post or enforce any limitations on visitors between the hours of 7:00 am and 9:00 pm. Exceptions to these times of visitation may be allowed, if the visit does not negatively impact the privacy or need to rest for others in the home.**
2. **All visitors will be warmly received by staff and every effort will be made to accommodate a comfortable and, if desired, private place for the visit including, but not limited to, the resident’s bedroom, the office, common areas of the house, porches or patios, or the external grounds.**
3. **Visitors will be asked to sign the guest book upon each visit.**
4. Although visits rarely impact the home in any negative way, the following circumstances require staff to advise supervisory staff as soon as possible:
5. Visits that impact the preferences of other residents, such as excessive noise after some residents have gone to bed.
6. Loud or belligerent behavior by the visitor.
7. Any action by the visitor which interferes with the privacy of any resident.
8. In the event that any visitor, in the estimation of staff, presents the possibility of jeopardizing the safety of residents or staff, the visitor will be asked to leave the premises and the on-call supervisor or other supervisory staff will be notified immediately. This may include obvious signs of intoxication, threatening behavior, the presence of a weapon, or the destruction of any facility property. If, under these or similar circumstances, the visitor does not immediately comply with staff request to leave the premises, staff should immediately request support from law enforcement.
9. Any limitations on who may visit residents or when residents may have visitors, established by the resident’s legal guardian empowered to make such decisions, will be strictly enforced.
10. A resident may designate a visitor who is a family member, friend, guardian, or other individual as an essential caregiver. The visitation by the essential caregiver will be allowed for at least 2 hours daily in addition to any other visitation authorized by the residence. The essential caregiver will not be required to provide necessary care to the resident during the visit.
11. In person visitation will be allowed for the circumstances listed below, unless the resident objects, for a resident experiencing:

* end of life situations
* The need to make more than one major medical decision,
* a struggle with the change in environment and lack of in-person support,
* needed encouragement by caregiver for activities of daily living when cues were previously provided by a family member or friend.
* isolation from the community and activities and is seldom speaking,
* emotional distress at the death of a family member or friend.
* needed support for medical appointments from a family member or friend.

1. Subject to the limitations set forth herein, every resident shall have the right to unrestricted private communication including receiving and sending unopened correspondence, access to the telephone and visitation with persons of his or her choice.

**Infection Control**:

The Arc of Putnam County will assure that all staff are trained and knowledgeable in infection control (i.e. hand washing, sanitizing, required PPE, social distancing) necessary to facilitate safe social activity and visitation for residents as indicated by community conditions and any declared state of emergency. The protocols will not prohibit consensual physical contact between a resident and visitor. At no time will the provider staff or administrator ask for proof of vaccination or immunization. Group Home Managers are responsible for ensuring adherence to this policy.