Effective January 1, 2013, Section 3200.5 was added to the Family Code, which requires any standards for supervised visitation providers adopted by the Judicial Council (i.e., Standard 5.20 of the California Standards of Judicial Administration) to conform to the new provisions of AB 1674. Family Code section 3200 required the Judicial Council to develop standards for supervised visitation providers in accordance with guidelines set forth in the statute. The Judicial Council developed and adopted, effective January 1, 1998, the Uniform Standards of Practice for Providers of Supervised Visitation as set forth under Standard 5.20. The passage of AB 1674 codifies, in part, some of the existing provisions under Standard 5.20 – the Uniform Standards of Practice for Providers of Supervised Visitation.

According to the California Association of Supervised Visitation Service Providers (CASVSP), the sponsor of the bill, the intent behind AB 1674 was to ensure that supervised visitation providers are properly trained and complying with Standard 5.20 to enhance the safety and protection of families court-ordered to supervised visitation, especially in cases of domestic violence and child abuse. AB 1674 will require:

1. Supervised visitation providers to be professional or nonprofessional providers;
2. Professional providers to receive 24 hours of training on specific subject areas outlined under Section 3200.5 of the Family Code;
3. Professional providers to sign a declaration that they meet the training and qualifications of a provider; and
4. Supervised visitation providers to adhere to certain procedures and practices for program service delivery.

Additionally, the bill changes the qualifications for nonprofessional and professional providers and adds a requirement that the court, in any case it has determined there is domestic violence or child abuse or neglect, as defined in Section 11165.6 of the Penal Code and the court determines supervision is necessary, then the court must consider whether to use a professional or nonprofessional provider based upon the child’s best interest.

Family Code section 3200.5 does not specify who should provide the required training—it states only that professional providers must receive 24 hours of training on subject areas described in the statute. However, the court and professional providers are encouraged to ensure training is done by qualified professionals that have been trained by the Administrative Office of the Courts (the trainers have received comprehensive Standard training on the intent of the law). The Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families, Children & the Courts, Access to Visitation Grant Program is working in a collaborative partnership with CASVSP to provide
statewide training and technical assistance for professional providers to help ensure statewide uniformity and consistency regarding training on Family Code section 3200.5(d)(1) and Standard 5.20 and achieving the goals of the Legislation.

AB 1674 can be located at http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_1651-1700/ab_1674_bill_20120928_chaptered.html.

If you have questions or need additional information or require technical assistance or training, please feel free to contact Shelly La Botte, Access to Visitation Grant Program Manager, at shelly.labotte@jud.ca.gov. Please note that specific questions about the history of AB 1674 or CASVSP organization should be directed to Sonia Melara, President of CASVSP, at info@casvsp.org.