

Family Time Visitation FAQs

Parent's Access (Phone/Computer)

Q: How are parents going to obtain access to phones, computers and WI-FI to do visitation?

A: For those families without equipment, Family Time Providers (or a case worker in those instances where a family time provider is not assigned) will refer to Concrete Goods Providers. Depending on what equipment is needed, it may take several days to get the equipment to the family members, but providers will do their best to get necessary equipment as quickly as possible.

Q: If a parent doesn't have the electronic capability, are providers able to go to the parent(s) to facilitate remote visitation with their child(ren)?

A: The intent of remote visitation is to minimize in-person contact to prevent the spread of COVID-19. If a provider believes a parent needs in-person help facilitating a video conference, we require that the provider follow the CDC guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/>.

Q: What happens if a parent loses their phone provided to them by the department for remote visitation?

A: Parents should reach out to the provider that is overseeing their Family Time visitation (or case worker if there is no Family Time provider). DCYF will continue to develop a plan to address lost phones and other devices. DCYF values the importance of keeping parties connected.

Types of Connections

Q: Are three-way phone calls acceptable?

A: Yes, only if video conferencing technology is not available.



Q: Can pictures and videos be shared between the parties?

A: Yes, that would be especially appreciated by those parents who have infants or nonverbal children. DCYF encourages all forms of communication during this difficult time. It is important to always check with the case worker to make sure this is approved.

Q: Is DCYF allowing relative caregivers to do visits using Skype?

A: Yes, if the case worker has established that the relative caregiver is allowed to do Skype or another similar videoconferencing platform for visits with the parents, that should stay in place. If relatives need help obtaining technology or supporting visits in general, they should contact their caseworker.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Questions:

Q: Are foster parents required to facilitate the remote visits?

A: Where foster parents were facilitating visits prior to COVID-19, those arrangements should continue. In most other cases, Family Time providers will coordinate and facilitate visits, and foster parents may need to help coordinate technology for a child(ren) in their home.

Q: What about visits that are already set up and facilitated by foster parents, will these continue or transfer to Family Time providers?

A: If visitation was arranged by the case worker with the foster parent then it will remain the same. If the foster parent is not able or willing to provide video conferencing, then the case worker will be required to submit a visit referral via Sprout to have a provider assigned. Emergent interim policy is attached:

[https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Family%20Time%20Interim%20Policy%20memo%20FINAL%20\(003\).pdf](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Family%20Time%20Interim%20Policy%20memo%20FINAL%20(003).pdf)

Q: How will privacy and confidentiality be respected for foster parents and caregivers during video conferencing?

A: We have provided the following link to the foster parent and caregivers with ideas for them to help protect their privacy and confidentiality while assisting with video conferencing.

- **Tip sheet for Foster Parents:**
https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/CWP_0049.pdf

- **Tip sheet for Caregivers:**
https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/CWP_0045.pdf

Q: Should a visit supervisor go to a foster parent or caregiver’s home and set up a remote visit?

A: *The intent of remote visitation is to minimize in-person contact to prevent the spread of COVID-19. If a provider believes a caregiver needs in-person help facilitating a video conference, we require that the provider follow the CDC guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/>.*

Q: Can visits occur by audio only?

A: *Yes, if technology isn’t available for video conferencing and/or it is the method of communication approved by all parties.*

Q: Is there flexibility around the timing of visits with many foster parents and caregivers working from home?

A: *DCYF is encouraging flexibility. We know this virus can be scary and the importance of Family Time is a high priority for us. This will take creativity, discussion and planning with the case worker and the foster parents or caregivers.*

Q. What if foster parents or kinship caregivers feels uncomfortable letting the child or youth use their device?

A: *DCYF is authorizing purchases of equipment based on need. In these situations, the Family Time provider and/or case worker should engage with the caregivers and problem solve how to help address their concerns.*

Visit Referrals

Q: Should referrals be put on hold?

A: *No, visit referrals should not be put on hold. For visit referrals that were canceled, they should be re-referred through Sprout.*

Q: Several cases have been pulled from our agency because placements are providing the remote visits. I fear that once this is over, those visits may need to go back to being supervised. How will that process look?

A: *The Case Manager will re-refer through sprout.*

Make-Up Visits

Q: Are we going to be able to provide make-up sessions for hours lost during this remote visit time frame when we are able to do face to face visits again?

A: *The case manager, supervisor, provider and the parents will develop a makeup plan if one is needed.*

Missed Visits

Q: Do we still allow 15 minutes for all parties to connect?

A: *DCYF is being flexible and hope our providers are, as well. DCYF recommends 45 minutes to connect the visit before it is considered cancelled. Document in Sprout as a technology error.*

Q: (1) Are three missed calls considered the same as three missed visits? (2) Will we need a new referral?

A: *This will be answered in two parts.*

(1) DCYF is allowing flexibility as to three missed visits or calls. Due to technical support for the providers, caregivers and parents it is going to take some time to get situated in remote visitation. Providers should allow more than three missed calls, and the caseworker and team should evaluate on a case-by-case basis.

(2) If the provider has clear indication that the parents are not responding, then it is required that the visit referral be resolved in Sprout. If parents re-engage, then the case worker will have to resubmit the visit referral.

Sprout Documentation

Q: How are no-shows documented?

A: No-shows can be counted by the number of phone attempts. Document in Sprout with respect to missed visit due to technical failure it will not be counted against the parent or provider.

Q: How can we confirm visitations are completed and their length of time if we do not have signature sheets?

A: At this time we are not using signature sheets. Please document in Sprout your start and end time.

General Questions

Q: What about the unsupervised, transport-only families?

A: As with other visits during this time, in-person contact is discouraged in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This applies to unsupervised visits, as well, and Family Time providers should coordinate these visits by videoconference but not supervise or monitor the visits.

Q: Can we do three one-hour visits instead of one three-hour visit?

A: DCYF is allowing flexibility as to frequency and duration of family time visits.

Example:

Court ordered Family Time visit plan is referred for 2 hours, supervised, 3 times per week.

This is a good example of where flexibility can be considered. Because visits are moving to remote, it may make sense to do a ½ hour phone call or remote visit every day to meet the court ordered family time visit plan. As always, please discuss these ideas with the case worker so that they can work with the families.

Q: Is DCYF utilizing visitation supervisors?

A: Yes, depending on the level of supervision.

Billing

Q: How do we bill for video conferencing or phone calls?

A: DCYF will be moving to a retainer payment for the months when the waiver of in person visits are in place. This retainer payment will be based upon an average of the six months of payments made to your organization from July 2019 to January 2020. We are willing to make some adjustments to the amount on a provider by provider basis.

For March, providers may either bill as usual or receive the retainer payment. DCYF will be reaching out to each provider to communicate the calculated retainer payment and to determine the provider's plan for March billing.

In exchange for this retainer payment you will be available to facilitate electronic visits and maintain your staff or subcontractors to the extent the retainer payment allows.

If a provider is able to take additional referrals that results in costs that exceed the retainer for April, we can discuss that on a provider by provider basis when we have referral and acceptance data.

Contracts:

Q: What about signature logs not able to be signed for contract compliance?

A: At this time we are not using signature logs. Please document in Sprout your start and end time.

Q: Are we going to do amendments to our current Family Time contracts?

A: DCYF is not planning on contract amendments at this time. We will instead be waiving requirements in your contracts. Program staff are identifying all provisions of the contracts that need to be waived. DCYF will make a website available where providers can read through the waived components and agree to the changes. This will be much faster than a traditional amendment process.

Q: Do we need auto insurance coverage because transportation is not needed at this time?

A: Yes, this is still a requirement at this time.

Information Technology (IT)

Q: Can providers use other online video apps other than Zoom or WebEx?

A: *Yes, DCYF is being flexible on this. At the same time, Zoom and WebEx are preferred for stability and security reasons.*

Additional Questions

Contact Deanna L. Morrison, DCYF Permanency Planning Program Manager, by calling 360-902-7590 or email at Deanna.Morrison@dcyf.wa.gov.