

Parent Tip Sheet for Remote Visitation

We know how stressful things are right now and appreciate everything you are doing to stay connected and supportive of your child(ren). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and a declaration of emergency at both the state and national levels, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is taking additional steps to safeguard the health of the children and families it serves.

On March 26, 2020, Gov. Jay Inslee issued a proclamation suspending in-person visitation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/proclamations/20-33 - COVID-19 DCYF Visitation-Remedial Services %28tmp%29.pdf.

We want to encourage and support you to maintain regular visitation with your child(ren). Please contact your case manager or visitation provider to establish a virtual visit.

Emergency Interim Policy

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and declaration of emergency, DCYF has made changes to Policy 4254 Family Time and Sibling and Relative visits. You can view the interim policy guidance on our website: [www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Family Time Interim Policy memo FINAL \(003\).pdf](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Family Time Interim Policy memo FINAL (003).pdf).



Virtual Visits

Visitation providers will be using an online application to conduct remote visitations.

Check with your visitation provider to learn what online application they are using for the visit. There should be no cost to you to participate in a virtual visit or download an application on your smartphone, tablet or access the webpage on your computer.

We know a virtual visit will be different from an in-person visit. Below are some suggestions on how to make a virtual visit successful:

- Tell your visit provider or caregiver about any special songs, books, foods, routines or comfort items that they can make available during the virtual visit to help the children feel safer.
- You are still able to engage with your children and ask questions as to their well-being.
- You will be able to view their artwork, report cards and favorite toys, just like if you were physically with them.
- You and the caregiver and provider can be creative to make these virtual visits fun and engaging.



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Caregivers and Foster parents have also been provided with some suggestions on how to make the virtual visit successful. Below are the suggestions that have been provided to them as well:

- **Infants:** Put out a bunch of toys, and let the parents watch the baby play. Talk with each other about baby's likes and dislikes and current routines. Older babies can sit in the high chair and eat or play during the visit.
- **Toddlers:** Since Toddlers are SO active, most of these visits are going to be the foster parent following the child with the phone or computer. If its nice outside, go outside so the parent can watch the child play.
- **Preschoolers:** Set out some toys from the beginning of the visit. Preschoolers love to show things off such as a favorite toy, their room, artwork, etc. Set out favorite snacks for the children to enjoy.
- **Ages 6-10:** Ask the youth what they want to do during their virtual visit. Help them brainstorm some things they want to show their parents or things they would like to do together. Try to figure out an activity parents and kids can do together. This can be a shared experience like dual art projects (coloring or drawing together). Read a book.
- **Ages 11 and older:** Involve the youth in planning the virtual visit. Ask them what they would like the visit to look like, where they want it to occur, etc. Talk about day-to-day activities, how learning is going. Do a learning activity together. Create a book for each other while contact is limited, like a journal. Baking or cooking together - parents can talk a child through making a favorite family dish.

If you don't have a phone or computer

If you do not have a smartphone, tablet, Wi-Fi, Data, or a computer that you can use to participate in virtual visits, please let your visitation provider and/or case worker know. They will work with you to come up with a plan to get you the equipment you need in order to participate in the video conference.

Safety Considerations

Providing for child safety is part of DCYF's core mission. Video conferencing may have different safety risks to consider than in-person visitation. Below are a few safety considerations while a remote visitation is occurring:

- Ensure identifying information is not visible while doing a video conference. This includes addresses or phone numbers, passwords, SSNs, or full names (first middle last).
- Conduct video conferences in areas that are hazard-free.
- No recording of the visitation is permitted.
- Do not have people around that should not or are not approve to be a part of visitation.

How to talk to kids about COVID-19

News of the coronavirus is everywhere and most children have already heard about the virus and have been impacted by the changes the virus has brought to our lives. Child Care Resources has put together a document about talking with children about COVID-19. You can access this document online.

Questions

Communication during this time is essential. If you are unable to participate in a virtual visitation or have questions or concerns, please talk with your caseworker. If you have a contracted community provider, you can also talk with them about your concerns or questions. We will continue to provide support to you during this time. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.