



Family Time In-Person Visitation Protocol During COVID-19

Parent Information

We know these have been stressful and challenging times and appreciate everything you are doing to stay connected and supportive of your child(ren).

Given increasing COVID-19 disease activity across the state, reducing the opportunity to transmit the virus in Family Time visits needs to be addressed in every case. For more information, go to <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/what-you-need-know/covid-19-risk-assessment-dashboard>. At the same time, it is vitally important for children to remain connected with their parents and siblings during the pandemic, which has serious emotional and cognitive consequences for children and youth.

The caseworker will work with you, your legal representation, the caregiver and visitation providers to create an agreed temporary COVID-19 Aware Family Time Plan. You can review the Temporary COVID Aware Family Time Plan guidance on our website: www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/FamTimePlan.pdf.



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

In-Person Visitation During COVID-19

To ensure the health and safety of children, families, parents and caregivers, the Department of Health (DOH) has provided health guidance and protocols that need to be followed to make the visitation as safe as possible for all participants.

Prior to the Visitation

The Family Time provider or caseworker (if a caseworker is the one supervising the visit) will call you and the foster parent or caregiver, the day prior to confirm the visit. On the call, the Family Time provider or caseworker will ask if anyone in the home is experiencing any of the following symptoms, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DOH Screening Guidelines, that cannot be attributed to another health condition:

1. Does the child or anyone in the home have any of the following symptoms within the last day that are not caused by another condition?

- Fever (100.4 F) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Unusual fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Recent loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

There are other signs of being sick. Signs may include flushed cheeks, tiredness, and in the case of infants and toddlers, extreme fussiness.

2. Has the child or anyone in the home been in close contact with anyone with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
3. Has the child or anyone in the home had a positive COVID-19 test for active virus in the past 10 days?
4. Within the past 14 days, has a public health or medical professional told the child or anyone in the home to self-monitor, self-isolate, or self-quarantine because of concerns about COVID-19 infection?

If the responses to the screening questions are no, the in-person visit will move forward.

If the responses of either the parent, foster parent or caregiver to the screening questions are yes, the Family Time provider or caseworker shall:

- Offer to change the visit from in-person to remote.
- If the remote visit is not an option, cancel the visit and reschedule.

The contracted Family Time provider shall contact the caseworker immediately (within one business day) to let them know the change in modality and/or cancellation of the visitation.

If you are concerned about a change in your visit, please contact your caseworker immediately. See the section “Reschedule a Visit” for directions on when to safely reschedule.



On the Day of the Visit

Prior to the visit occurring or transporting the child, the contracted Family Time provider or caseworker shall ask the following questions of the foster parents or caregiver prior to transporting the child and shall ask the parent prior to beginning the visit, the following questions:

- Are you or is anyone in your household experiencing any of the symptoms per the DOH Screening Guidelines that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- Have you or anyone in your household, within the last 14 days, had close contact with someone currently sick with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

If the responses of the parent, foster parent or caregiver to the screening questions are no, the Family Time Provider or caseworker can move forward with the scheduled visit.

If the responses of the visit participants to the screening questions are yes, the Family Time provider or caseworker shall:

- Offer to change the visit from in-person to remote.
- If the remote visit is not an option, cancel the visit and reschedule.

The contracted Family Time provider shall contact the caseworker immediately (within one business day) to let them know the change in modality and/or cancellation of the visitation.

If you are concerned about a change in your visit, please contact your caseworker immediately. See the section “Reschedule a Visit” for directions on when to safely reschedule.

During the Visitation

The following safety protocols will be followed during the in-person visitation:

- Masks:
 - All adults are required to wear masks.
 - Children age 5 years or older must wear cloth face coverings when attending visitation.
 - Children age 2 to 4 years may wear cloth face coverings with adult supervision.
 - Cloth face coverings should not be worn by:
 - Children younger than age 2 years
 - Those with a disability that prevents them from comfortably wearing or removing a face covering.
 - Those with certain respiratory conditions or trouble breathing.
 - Those who are deaf or hard of hearing and use facial and mouth movements as part of communication.
 - Those advised by a medical, legal, or behavioral health professional that wearing a face covering may pose a risk to that person.
 - In rare circumstances when a cloth face covering cannot be worn, children and adults may use a clear face covering or a face shield with a drape (covering nose and mouth) as an alternative to a cloth face covering. Face shields should extend below the chin, to the ears, and have no gap at the forehead.
- Younger children must be supervised when wearing a cloth face covering. These children will need help with their masks and getting used to wearing them.
- Continue physical distancing while wearing cloth face coverings.
- Children may remove cloth face coverings to eat and drink and when they can be physically distanced outside. If children need a “mask break,” take them outside or to a large, well ventilated room where there is sufficient space to ensure more than 6 feet of physical distance between people.”

- Visit participants will be asked to wash hands for at least 20 seconds using warm water and soap or use hand sanitizer when the visit begins (DOH recommends hand sanitizer to be 60% alcohol).
- Visitation is limited to the person(s) identified in the court's order on visits. If the caseworker has approved others to participate in the visit, the parent may use their phone or video conference equipment to include any additional participants remotely.
- If you'd like to bring toys/items to the visit, the toy/item must be wiped down in the room and the toy/item should not go with the child back to their foster or caregiver home.
- The visit supervisor needs to practice social distancing during visitation. We do not expect that the parent and child(ren) will practice social distancing during a visitation, although you may agree to do so voluntarily if you think it would be safer.
- If these health and safety protocols are not followed before and during visits, the in-person visit will be canceled and the caseworker will be notified immediately.

Overnight and Extended Visits

Overnight and extended visits are key to the safe, timely reunification of children with their parents. These visits are court-ordered and should occur as scheduled, even during the pandemic. Please refer to the publication *Overnight and Extended Family Time Visits During COVID-19 (CWP_0069)* for more information: www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/CWP_0069.pdf.



Rescheduled Visits

To reschedule visits to in-person, the provider and/or caseworker must adhere to DOH timelines for when it is okay to no longer self-isolate.

DOH guidance, available online at www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVIDconcerned.pdf states that if someone has a fever, cough or other symptoms of COVID-19, even if they have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, should stay home and away from others until:

- At least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement of respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); AND
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

The contracted Family Time provider or caseworker shall offer remote visitation during the time the person is recovering from the COVID-19 like symptoms, assuming they feel well enough to participate.

If these health and safety protocols are not followed, the contracted Family Time provider shall contact the caseworker immediately (within one business day).



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Masks and cleaning products should be obtained through your DCYF field office. You are required to wear a mask and utilize sanitation expectations anytime you are engaging with people. For DOH guidance, go to: www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020/HigherRiskforSeriousIllness.

Technology for Virtual Services

Please refer to the Tip-Sheet for information on technology options to support birth parent participation in services: www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/PhonesTipSheet.pdf.

Transportation Guidance

We are taking every precaution to ensure the health and safety of your child. Providers and caseworkers have been given the following information regarding transporting the child(ren) to and from visitation. The following guidance will be followed:

- Masks or cloth face coverings should be worn while in the car by the child(ren) and the person transporting.
- Children under the age of 2 years old should not wear masks.
- Surfaces in the car need to be wiped down following sanitizing procedures in between each and every transport.
- Increase ventilation while in transit by opening vehicle windows when children are transported by providers.
- An option is to ask caregivers to transport children to and from visits to reduce exposure.
- Car seats should be cleaned according to your car seat owner's manual. Review the manual for how to correctly wash and dry your specific car seat and its various components. It is important to **not** use anything additional in the car seat, as it could create a safety issue for the child. For instructions on how to safely clean coronavirus from your child's car seat go here: www.consumerreports.org/car-seats/how-to-safely-clean-coronavirus-from-your-childs-car-seat.
- The contractor shall not transport children from multiple households at the same time in the same vehicle. If sibling children live at the same foster or caregiver home, they can be transported together in the same vehicle, but you should not pick up children from different foster or caregiver homes and transport them at the same time.
- Siblings that are attending visitation together may be transported in the same vehicle, even if they are from different households.

Cleaning Guidance

To ensure the health and safety of you, your child(ren), the visit supervisors and others who are in contact with the visitation participants, the visitation rooms will be cleaned, sanitized and disinfected after every visit. DOH provides the following guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting, which visitation providers and DCYF are adhering too:

- **Cleaning** removes germs, dirt, food, body fluids and other material. Cleaning increases the benefit of sanitizing or disinfecting.
- **Sanitizing** reduces germs on surfaces to levels that are safe.
- **Disinfecting** kills germs on surfaces of a clean object.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates sanitizer and disinfectant chemicals. If you sanitize or disinfect without cleaning first, it will reduce how well these chemicals work and may leave more germs on the object.

Current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that disinfectants should be registered by the EPA for use against the novel coronavirus. For more information, go to www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-coronavirus-covid-19. Disinfectants based on hydrogen peroxide or alcohol are safer.

The University of Washington has a handout with options for safer cleaning and disinfecting products that work well against COVID-19 online here: http://osha.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/FactSheet_Cleaning_Final_UWDEOHS_0.pdf.

Clean and sanitize toys, equipment and surfaces in the rooms. Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces like doorknobs, faucet handles, check-in counters and restrooms. Use alcohol wipes to clean keyboards and electronics. Wash hands after you clean. Reduce the spread of germs in the program space by removing toys that are not easily cleaned such as stuffed animals and pillows. Rotate toys that are out at any one time, so they can be cleaned and sanitized. Limit shared materials to those you can easily clean and sanitize or disinfect. Children's books and other paper-based materials are not high-risk for spreading the virus.

How to Report Exposure to COVID-19

If you are potentially exposed to COVID-19, immediately notify the DCYF caseworker.

Questions

Communication during this time is essential. If you have questions about visitation, 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.

If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format or language, please contact DCYF Constituent Relations (1-800-723-4831 | 360-902-8060, ConstRelations@dcyf.wa.gov).