

Child Care Provider Webinar Q&A August 4, 2020

Virtual and In-Person Licensing Visits

Q: Is DCYF requiring licensors to take COVID-19 tests before visiting sites and having them administered within a certain number of days?

A: We would only recommend staff be tested if they have been exposed or are having symptoms.

Q: Is there a timeframe after our virtual that the onsite will happen? Days, weeks, months?

A: Within 30 days unless the conditions of the pandemic make that timeline unsafe. Please note: The policy remains within 30 days. DCYF is making some temporary changes to postpone most onsite visits related to monitor visits.

Q: I thought that the in-person inspection was to monitor how we carry out safety procedures and the health of the children. So what would be the point of having a visit if we can schedule one without children attending?

A: Interaction with a child will need to be observed at some point, either virtually in-person.

Q: How will the files be shared (five students, five staff)? Are we holding them up to the camera on a "zoom meeting" or can we download them and send them to you? What if there are internet issues?

A: We are having those discussions now. We will be reducing the number down to what is essential for health and safety. If there are internet issues, the visit can be rescheduled. If the virtual visit cannot take place, an in-person visit will need to be scheduled

Q: Can we do a drop box instead of holding up documents to the camera?

A: We can look into ways to submit documents instead of showing them to the camera. We do not have a firm answer on this right now.

Q: Do we have to have children present during the virtual visit?

A: The provider may choose to conduct the virtual visit at a time without children around. Interaction with a child will need to be observed at some point, so if it is not observed during the virtual visit, it will need to be observed during the in-person visit.

Q: I am concerned that a licensor that has been in other spaces will be entering my home. I feel very hesitant to let someone in my house and risk the potential of harm to my children, staff or families. Is there an exception to this?

A: DCYF is putting a short-term hold on the onsite portion of the monitor inspections unless serious risk to children is identified during the virtual visit. We will reevaluate conditions in November to determine if/when we will resume these visits.

Q: My question is what if we have to walk around during a virtual meeting? It is practically impossible if you are to be present with children.

A: The provider could choose to conduct the virtual visit at a time where the children are outside or napping, but they would need to arrange for interaction with a child to be observed during the in-person visit.

Q: Are the licensors going to be visiting multiple sites in one day?

A: At this point, no. As reopening progresses that may change. We understand the need to be very careful on transmission.

Q: Can we arrange the visits to take place when the children are outdoors?

A: Yes. Interaction with a child would need to be observed either virtually or in-person.

Q: Each region follows a different health district; will DCYF follow their recommendations for in-person visits?

A: We always defer to DOH and then local health districts. If for some reason they told us no, we would not complete these visits. If an area became a hot spot, we would also reevaluate the in-person visit. Please note: The onsite portion of the monitor visit is being put on hold. DCYF will re-evaluate in November when/if these visits resume.

Q: Do we have to have a thermometer to check water?

A: If you do not, the licensor could check that during the health and safety check.

School Age Care

Q: What is going on with the agency regarding school-age care with schools going virtual in the fall? What would be the process for that?

A: There is lots of work going on around school closures from the licensing perspective. We are working with many internal and external partners. We want to make sure that extra care in the community is absolutely needed and cannot be met with current capacities. We also have the

emergency child care license and waiver process when the need is there. We do not know exactly how that will all look right now, but we are asking the questions.

Q: Will the state be paying a higher rate due to us having to provide schooling to students this fall?

A: At this time, there is no special school age rate planned and confirmed.

Q: Will DCYF continue to cover school-aged children for full day care throughout the school year?

A: If a family is eligible for and needs full time care during the school year, they can call the Contact Center and make the request.

Child Care Guidance and Provider Supports

Q: I have a question about masks and social distancing for the children in my care. Where can I find answers?

A: You can find DOH guidance **here**. If you need more specific guidance, contact your local public health district.

Q: I have a question about masks and social distancing for myself and/or staff at my center or family home, where can I find answers?

A: The Labor and Industries (LNI) Washington Coronavirus Hazard Considerations for Employers can be found **here**. Which Mask for Which Task? can be found **here**. Common questions regarding worker face covering and mask requirements can be found **here**. Providers who are concerned about their health and face coverings should consult their health care provider.

Q: What can we do when families travel to hot spots and want to return to care?

A: Each provider will make their own decision and have their own policy. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have information on travel. **CDC Travel Recommendations**

Q: Are Early Achievers visits being done?

A: No, not at this time.

Q: What is the suggested group size per room?

A: Right now, it is 22 maximum per room, including staff. Providers still need to abide by licensing requirements and ratios by age group.

Q: Can we extend the waivers?

A: Reach out to your licenser to discuss specific information regarding your waiver.

Q: Is a waiver for capacity for in-home providers possible?

A: Yes, it is if there is a need. We are trying to support all providers.

Q: Where can I find the emergency waiver?

A: Find a link to the emergency waiver [here](#).

Q: Are there virtual First Aid and CPR trainings available?

A: Yes, we will send the link out again.

Q: What supports are in place for children of families that are experiencing homelessness?

A: Information about what Child Care Aware is doing for children experiencing homelessness can be found [here](#).

Q: Virtual tours by a staff member using their technology to "walk the licensor" through the building. Any concerns about video/photo recording/use in the building?

A: The intent is that these be live stream visits with no recording involved.

Q: If a violation is viewed by a licensor, what is the procedure? Show the corrective plan virtually?

A: Unless a non-compliance issue identified as "immediate risk" is found during the virtual monitor visit, onsite visits will not be occurring for the near future. DCYF will reevaluate circumstances in November to determine if/when those visits will resume.

Q: If a licensor is going into and coming from multiple buildings, this increases the potential spread of COVID-19. How would DCYF mitigate contact tracing? If a licensor is found to have contracted COVID-19, will all facilities they visit be required to close due to the potential exposure? Could DCYF be held liable for potential exposure?

A: Currently most onsite visits are on hold. However, in the event a visit is required, licensing staff are required to follow all the recommended protocols to protect others and themselves including: wearing clean Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), screening self and the situation at the facility, physical distancing, and hand washing. If there is any known risk that a licensor has been exposed, they will not go into any facility. Any known exposure to COVID 19 either by a licensor or to a licensor will be followed up following local public health recommendations based upon the specific situation.

Q: If a licensor is doing a virtual visit, why they are coming in a month to visit again? Why not come in person the first time, as they will be coming to check anyway?

A: The monitor visit typically takes more time and involves a great deal of interaction. By doing the checklist and primary visit virtually, the time a licensor is onsite will be minimized. DCYF is working to minimize risk of COVID exposure. The added benefit is that providers can schedule the virtual time when it works best for their program, with less impact to staffing levels or supervision.

Q: How are you going to determine if COVID is "really bad" in order to decide whether or not to conduct the unannounced Health and Safety Verification Visit?

A: Currently we are putting most Health and Safety Verification visits on hold.

Q: What does "14 days for a family home move" mean?

A: You can find this defined in RCW. It allows for a family home provider who moves locations to maintain their services to children if they:

1. Apply for a license at the new location prior to moving to the new location and
2. Have an inspection by DCYF within 14 days of moving into the new location.

Q: If there is nothing to be checked or verified, will they still come out?

A: Yes, when licensing staff are again doing onsite visits.

Q: For school age sites that are now running full day care. How will they have time to run a program and do a four hour virtual meeting?

A: The virtual inspection will be scheduled at a time that will work better for them. Unless it is a very large program, it is not expected that these virtual inspections would take four hours. If necessary, the inspection could be broken into more than one visit.

Q: What accommodations is DCYF making for providers who are more rural and may have weak internet/data access?

A: If a virtual visit cannot be completed, an unannounced onsite monitor visit will be conducted at some time in the future.

Q: What are centers who have school age children doing to accommodate kids whose school district is doing remote learning only?

A: There are many different responses to the current situation.

Q: Where can we find an updated checklist?

A: The checklist was eliminated in July 2019. The WAC relating to inspections changes each year and things that do not pertain to a specific provider are not visible on the checklist for their monitor. Each provider's monitor checklist is unique to their program. There is a sample full checklist on the website.

Q: If providers had known that this would be the topic today, I guarantee you, more people would be on to voice concern about licensors visiting sites during a public health emergency when many carriers are asymptomatic. The department can ask for a waiver until the public health emergency is under control, correct?

A: DCYF has requested a federal waiver.

Q: Will we have the same checklist in advanced so that we can be prepared?

A: For a monitor visit, no.

Q: What if a provider does not have children enrolled when they have a monitor visit. How will the observation be done?

A: A follow-up visit, either virtual or in-person can be conducted when children are back in care.

Q: For centers with directors or administrators working in classrooms, will licensors be available after hours?

A: Arrangements may be made. DCYF is supporting alternate work hours. Each individual has unique circumstances that may impact the hours they are available.

Q: Is taking temp at the door a WAC requirement?

A: No. This is a DOH recommendation.

Q: With the health and safety check, can they still be done even if we do not have children enrolled yet, and what do we do when the director is a teacher in the classroom as well? How are they able to go around with the licenser?

A: Yes although an additional virtual or onsite visit will be required when children are in care. Licensing staff will work with the program to complete the visit. However, the health and safety verification visits are temporarily on hold for most monitor inspections

Q: Can the capacity guidance be expressed in square feet per child to allow for our use of space?

A: Capacity is determined by more than square feet. It is also dependent upon toileting and handwashing sinks, staffing and maximum group size per WAC. The minimum square feet per child is 35 for children over one year and 50 for infants. The outdoor requirement is 75 square feet per child.

Q: Many centers have extremely limited staff right now and taking the place of a licenser who walks around for several hours is simply not possible.

A: A licenser should not be onsite for several hours. All necessary onsite visits should be brief. Any necessary conversations or discussions should be occurring by phone or Zoom and can be arranged for when a provider is not needed for care.

Q: Will licensing consider allowing us to submit a waiver to go back to 1/2 nap coverage to help cut down the amount of extra people coming into classrooms during this time?

A: All waivers will be considered. Supervision is one of the primary preventive requirements in WAC and is less likely to be approved for a waiver.

Q: Do we have to have a list of kids we are enrolling before my licenser will submit it for a school age program in the fall?

A: No, you do not need a list of the children you plan on enrolling. However, please assure that the need is actually unmet in your community. We still have many child care programs indicating they are not at capacity. DCYF is committed to supporting all licensed child care programs.

Q: What efforts will be added to use the virtual visit and checklists to complete the content without the onsite visit?

A: The onsite is necessary to complete the monitor visit. Licenser will attempt to complete the checklist virtually whenever possible. The onsite visit is necessary but will be done when it is determined that risk can be minimized for the program as well as licensing staff. As stated, the onsite part of the monitor visit is on hold (with minimal exceptions) until further notice.

Q: Will camp guidance be in place during the school year?

A: DCYF does not regulate camps. DOH has provided some recommendations that may assist programs in meeting these needs.

Q: I have asked the school district to provide para professionals from the district to help us with assisting with homework. According to the superintendent, they have it "on the table". We could not provide staff to help with homework. We have the room, not the staff. He said he would get back to me later about providing some teacher aides paid by the district.

A: DCYF does not regulate school district decisions. We support child care providers working with their local schools to address children's needs.

Q: Some facilities are being very careful even disallowing parents to enter their facility at this time to limit exposure. My concern is that not all places are following same rules and people moving from center to center could expose kids from one center to another unless each visit was 14 days apart to be sure if licenser was exposed at last visit they did not develop symptoms. Can these be spaced 14 days apart for child safety?

A: Because we are temporarily putting a hold on most monitor health and safety verification visits, this should not be an issue.

Q: Couldn't DCYF do a remote check of documentation (by uploading to a secure portal) and complete in-person components at a later date when it is safer?

A: Reviewing documentation is not the purpose of doing an onsite visit. DCYF is considering alternate methods of reviewing necessary documentation that do not include onsite requirements except in very specific situations, i.e.) a complaint.

Q: We should be looking at an emergency WAC that covers health and safety only. The stress on providers of what is going on is enough.

A: DCYF has implemented some lessening of requirements that are not directly related to children's health and safety. In addition, emergency waivers can be requested to address site specific needs for relief.

Q: If CACFP can request a waiver for in person visits, so can DCYF. Why is the state not requesting a waiver?

A: DCYF has requested a waiver from the federal government. It is important to note there is a different scope of responsibility between child care licensing and CACFP.

Q: Would the providers be notified if a licensor who came to visit becomes COVID positive? What accountability would the department take for financially impacting the business?

A: Yes, they would be notified if the visit occurred during a possible "exposure" time just as DCYF would hope that they will be notified if it turns out the licensor may have been "exposed" during their visit. DCYF will also follow local public health requirements or recommendations if such an exposure occurs.

Q: Can we transport school age children to public school? The district we are in is sending kindergarteners to public school.

A: There is no mandate prohibiting transportation. There are DOH recommendations for how to transport children safely if it must be done at all. The guidance relates to group size, physical distancing and ventilation.

Q: My school district uses an electrostatic cleaning mist for classrooms. Can we use this in preschool rooms as a supplement to three step cleaning?

A: As a supplement, yes.

Q: Is there a way to streamline re-applications for families who are back at work and now have increased co-pays?

A: Due to federal and state requirements, families that re-apply have a variety of eligibility requirements they must verify. Families can initiate a reapplication online at www.washingtonconnection.org or calling the Child Care Subsidy Contact Center at 844-626-8687.