

# Caregiver Tip-Sheet for Remote Visitation

Thank you for your continued commitment to serving children and families during this stressful time. We honor the work you have been doing and continue to do during this crisis period to care for the children of Washington state. 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%20-%20COVID-19%20DCYF%20Visitation-Remedial%20Services%20%28tmp%29.pdf](http://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/proclamations/20-33%20-%20COVID-19%20DCYF%20Visitation-Remedial%20Services%20%28tmp%29.pdf).

Children in your care who have been participating in Family Time Visits can continue visiting with their family members using video conference capabilities, allowing them to maintain these crucial connections while supporting the safety of limiting in-person interaction.

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



## Virtual Visit

If you already use video conferencing (FaceTime, skype, or others) you are welcome to continue using those; however, if you need a video conference option, you can download a free option called Zoom. Zoom is an easy-to-use video conference option that can be used on your phone or your computer. You can learn more at [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com).

We know a virtual visit will be a bit more difficult than an in-person visit. Below are some suggestions on how to make a virtual visit successful:

- **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 highchair 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 favorite toy, their room, art work, etc. Set out favorite snacks for the kids to enjoy.



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- **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.

## 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).
- Ensure that you do not have information about other clients in places that are visible to the camera.
- Conduct video conference in areas that are hazard free this is especially important for toddlers or children with special needs.
- No recording of the visitation is permitted.

## 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: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html).

## Questions

Communication during this time is essential. For questions, contact your caseworker. We will continue to provide support to you during this time. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.