

Staff 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. 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.

This tip-sheet provides a lot of important information about virtual visitation that will help you conduct a visitation and/or support our kids and families with remote visitation. This tip-sheet covers policy changes, communications to our families and providers, video equipment needs, safety considerations and how to talk to kids about COVID-19.

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).



Communication to Families and Providers

DCYF has created multiple tip sheets for our families and providers to help guide them through the virtual visitation process. These tip-sheets provide information regarding the policy changes, virtual visits, suggestions on how to make virtual visits successful, how to obtain video equipment for families if needed, safety considerations and how to talk to kids about COVID-19. Please take a moment to review each of these tip-sheets so you are familiar with the direction that is being given to our families and providers.

- Caregiver: www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/CWP_0045.pdf.
- Visitation Providers: www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/CWP_0046.pdf.
- Parents: www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/CWP_0048.pdf.
- Foster Parents: www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/CWP_0049.pdf.



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Video Conference for DCYF

DCYF is looking at an enterprise option for our staff to use video to conduct remote visitation. Currently, staff are not authorized to download any version of Zoom, or other video conference tools, for visitation or other DCYF related activities. To clarify, this is in regards to staff initiating a Zoom call, not joining a Zoom call. Many providers are using Zoom and other video conference applications and it is okay to join a video conference. More information will be shared with staff when an enterprise option is secured. Staff should continue to use WebEx, or any other already DCYF approved video conference application, for video conference needs until further direction is provided.

Video Conference Equipment for Families

Each tip-sheet provides details regarding video conference options. If a parent, or a foster parent or kinship family, does not have a telephone or computer that can support virtual visits, there are options to get them equipment they need. View *Guidance for DCYF Staff to Provide Video Conference Equipment for Families* (CWP_0052) at www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/CWP_0052.pdf DCYF will not be providing technology to providers. Providers are responsible for establishing their own video conference accounts and providing the necessary technology.

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:

- Turn the camera to focus on the user's face; don't move around a lot or walk around where sensitive data could potentially be seen.
- Check your location on your device to make sure it is turned off.
- 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 conferences 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.

Questions

Communication during this time is essential. It is critical that you remain in touch with your Supervisor and Area Administrator any challenges or successes using video conferencing.

For questions, contact Deanna Morrison, Permanency Program Manager at Deanna.morrison@dcyf.wa.gov.

We will continue to provide support to you during this time. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.