



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON
DIRECTOR

April 28, 2020

Dear Caregivers,

Thank you for your continued sacrifices and commitment to the children in your care. I sincerely appreciate all that you are doing to keep yourselves and your families safe during this pandemic. On April 24, 2020, Governor Whitmer issued [Executive Order 2020-59](#), which is effective until May 15, 2020. The order extends many of the stay home, stay safe requirements that were previously in place, but allows some additional activities to occur that were previously prohibited. In particular, the order allows individuals to leave their homes to visit a child in out of home care, or to facilitate a visit between a parent and a child in out of home care, when there is agreement between the child placing agency, the parent, and the caregiver about a safe visitation plan.

As a result, we have modified our guidance for parent-child visitation. The new guidance was issued to caseworkers on April 25, 2020 and describes the safety precautions that must be taken when planning visits. The safety and health of children, parents, caregivers and staff remains our highest priority.

Virtual visitation remains the safest option for contact between children and their parents. However, I recognize that in-person parenting time is critical to the well-being of children and their families. In-person parent and child visits may occur if such visits are consistent with the court order, case plan and all the following:

1. **Healthy Households** – No one in the parent or child’s household currently has COVID-19, had COVID-19 within the past 3 weeks, or has symptoms of COVID-19. It is critical that in-person visits not occur if known concerns are present that will compromise the health and safety of the individuals participating, including household members who are immunocompromised or have other pre-existing conditions that place them at higher risk.
2. **Screening Completed with “no” Responses** – Screening questions will be asked of anyone involved and all of their household members.
 - Is there any reason you have been instructed to self-quarantine or isolate? If yes, why?
 - Have you had contact with any Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) for COVID-19 within the last 14 days, OR with anyone with confirmed COVID-19?
 - Do you have any symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g., cough, sore throat, fever, or shortness of breath)?

3. **Consultation and Agreement** – The child’s parents, the child placing agency, and you should discuss and agree to the visitation plan. If public health concerns exist that cannot be overcome to the satisfaction of all involved, and cannot be resolved by agency/county leadership, the caseworker may elevate the concerns to me for a decision on how to proceed.

If all the criteria above are met for in-person visits to occur, the following guidance should be utilized during visits:

- Visits should occur outdoors whenever possible.
- If visits occur indoors, windows should be open, if possible.
- All participants should bring gloves, a mask or face covering, and/or sanitizer to the visit, if available.
 - Parents should wear a mask or face covering during the visit and children 2 years of age or older should be encouraged to wear a face covering when they are within 6 feet of their parents, to the extent that it does not lead them to touch their face more frequently or cause them to feel scared.
- Limit exposure to unsanitized surfaces and large groups of people when determining where a visit will take place.
- Individuals from different households who may be present during visits should maintain social distancing (6 feet). Social distancing between children and their parents is not expected.
- Everyone at the visit should thoroughly wash/sanitize their hands prior to and following the visit.
- Everyone should avoid handshakes and touching their face.
- Everyone should cover their mouth with a tissue when sneezing/coughing or do so into their elbow.
- Everyone is advised to change and wash their clothes when they return home.

We know that this has been an extremely difficult time for you and your family. I appreciate your flexibility and the compassion you have continued to show for the children in your care and for their parents. If you have any questions or concerns regarding parent-child visits, please contact your foster care caseworker for further information.

Please join us for the next Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver Town Hall meeting scheduled for **April 30, 2020 from 5:00 – 5:45 p.m.** via [this link](#). This meeting was previously scheduled for 7:00p.m., however, Governor Whitmer has scheduled a Town Hall for the same time. We would like you to be able to tune in to both, if you are interested and available.

Sincerely,



JooYeun Chang, Executive Director
Children’s Services Agency