



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON
DIRECTOR

June 2, 2020

Dear Caregivers,

I hope that you are doing well and continue to stay safe. I know you have been faced with great challenges over the past few months, and your patience and commitment to continue providing safety and stability to the child in your care during this difficult time are so greatly appreciated.

On June 1, 2020, the Governor issued [Executive Order 2020-110](#), ending the stay home order. Certain businesses will remain closed; however, retailers and restaurants will be able to open later this week with precautions in place to mitigate the risk of infection.

As the number of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths from COVID-19 continue to decline, the Governor is expected to lift even more restrictions while encouraging all citizens to implement practices to continue to keep everyone safe.

What does this mean for child welfare? As conditions improve in Michigan, we have been carefully assessing how and when to safely resume critical activities, like in-person parenting time and caseworker visits and services. Although plans may change depending on what happens with COVID-19, here is a preview of some of what we are planning and timeframes:

- June 1, 2020 – resumption of drug screening.
- June 1, 2020 – begin making in-person routine medical/dental appointments for children.
- Now through June 11, 2020 – resumption of in-person parenting time.
- Planning is underway to gradually resume in-person casework this month.

We recognize how important it is to children and their families to resume in-person parenting time and sibling visits as soon as safely possible. We also recognize the urgent need to ensure the safety of everyone involved. Last week, we asked local MDHHS offices and private agencies to develop plans and protocols to resume in-person parenting time and sibling visits no later than June 11, 2020. These plans require decisions on a case by case basis that include consideration of the health status of everyone involved, including foster parents, relative caregivers, caseworkers, children, and parents.

Detailed guidance has also been provided to caseworkers for conducting visits as safely as possible. The guidance includes:

- Conduct visits outdoors whenever possible.
- If visits occur indoors, open windows if feasible.
- Visits should include as few people as possible.

- If the visit must occur indoors, ensure visiting space is thoroughly cleaned/sanitized prior to and following the visit.
- Visits in local offices are not preferable; however, if this must occur, ensure all community toys/table activities are cleared from the room. Parents, caregivers, foster parents should be invited to bring their own freshly sanitized toys/activities for use during the visit and take with them following the visit with instruction to sanitize upon return home.
- Advise participants that they may bring their own gloves and/or sanitizer to the visit if they have them available. Advise careful hand hygiene for all visits. For all visits, having ready access to hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol will provide additional protection if used after touching frequently-used surfaces and before rubbing one's eye or nose.
- Limit exposure to unsanitized surfaces and large groups of people when determining where the visit will take place.
- Individuals from different households who may be present at the visits should maintain social distancing (6 feet). Social distancing between the parents and their children or among siblings is not expected during visits.
- Ensure all individuals involved in the visit have thoroughly washed/sanitized their hands prior to starting the visit and following the visit.
- Advise individuals involved to cover their mouth with a tissue when sneezing/coughing or do so into their elbow.
- Participants should wear a cloth face covering/mask during the visit. Children 2 years of age or older should be encouraged to wear a cloth 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.
- All participating individuals should be advised to change and wash clothes upon return home.

Your caseworker will be in contact with you soon to discuss resumption of in-person parent and sibling visits for the children in your care. You are encouraged to discuss these safety measures with your caseworker to determine how you can assist in ensuring safety for all involved.

Please join us for our next town hall on **Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 6 p.m.** To participate in the meeting, click the following link on June 10 at 6 p.m.: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#).

Thank you again for your dedication to the child in your care and for doing everything you can to promote their safety and healthy development. As additional activities resume, we will continue to provide you with updated information. Please reach out to your caseworker with any challenges or needs that you identify.

Sincerely,

Joo Chang

JooYeun Chang, Executive Director
MDHHS Children's Services Agency