

DCYF Home Visiting Programs COVID-19 Guidance Update

While Gov. Inslee's [announcement](#) lifted masking requirements for the general public in designated settings effective March 12, 2022, it also maintains masking requirements in health care settings, long-term care facilities, and public transit, and it stresses the importance of mindfulness related to continued masking in support of vulnerable families within the communities we serve. Additionally, the Department of Health (DOH) released [updated guidance](#) on March 10, specific to school, child care, early learning, you development, and day camp programs. A full set of resources and recommendations can be found [on the DOH website](#).

Home visiting programs have demonstrated great respect and support for their communities and the families they served throughout the pandemic though going to extraordinary lengths to adapt approaches to engaging families and stay connected to each other and their communities. As we transition to the new normal, we realize not everyone processes through this change at the same pace and maintaining the care and admiration for the families and communities with whom you work with continue to be imperative.

With these things in consideration, DCYF Home Visiting Services Account will be referring to DOH [guidance](#) for school, child care, early learning, youth development, and day camp programs for home visiting, which maintains that masks remain an important line of defense against the spread of COVID-19, and they are no longer universally required. Home visitors should consider the goals and preferences of families understanding that children under the age of 5 are not able to be vaccinated at this time. This guidance provides an update of the [April 26, 2021, Guidance on Returning to In-Person Services](#), specifically about facial coverings. As a reminder, DCYF required LIAs to establish policies and procedures that address at least the topic areas outlined below by Sept. 30, 2021.

In-Person Visit Policy/Procedure Categories

1. **Equity Impact:** No change
2. **Vaccination:** No change.
3. **Communication Plans with Families and Consent to In-person Services:** ***UPDATE*** Home visiting programs *may* include (change from *should* include) a consent form that gives information about the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and confirms voluntary, in-person circumstances.
4. **Risk Assessment:** No change.
5. **Physical Distancing:** ***UPDATE*** While still recommended for indoor, in-person visits it may not be feasible.
6. **Personal Protective Equipment:** ***UPDATE*** Masks are no longer required for in-person visits.
7. **Sanitation and Materials:** No change.
8. **Documentation for Contact Tracing:** No change.
9. **Flexibility of Contract Expectations and Caseloads:** No change.

Programs are encouraged to communicate with their teams and parents about masks concerns and hopes in transitioning to more frequent in-person visits. Thank you for all you do to support infants, toddlers, and their families.

If you have questions, please contact Laura Alfani, Strengthening Families Washington Administrator, at laura.alfani@dcyf.wa.gov or reach out to your DCYF program specialist, Kathy Tan, Ivon Urquilla, Susan Botarelli, or Ashley Cook.

