

Foster Parent 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.

If you choose to participate in Family Time Visits with a child(s) in your care with their family members, you are able to continue visits using video conference capabilities.

If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact your licenser or the case manager.

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).



Virtual Visit

Visitation providers will be using an online application to conduct remote visitations.

Check with your visitation provider to learn what online application they are using for the visit. There should be no cost to you to participate in a virtual visit or download an application on your smartphone, tablet or access the webpage on your computer.

We know a virtual visit will be different from 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 high chair 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 a favorite toy, their room, artwork, etc. Set out favorite snacks for the children to enjoy.
- **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).
- Conduct video conferences in areas that are hazard-free.
- 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. If you are unable to participate in a virtual visitation or have questions or concerns, please talk with your caseworker or licenser. If you have a contracted community provider assisting your visits, you can also talk with them about your concerns or questions. We will continue to provide support to you during this time. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.