

## MEMO

**TO:** DCFS and Purchase of Service Child Welfare Specialists and Supervisors  
**COPY:** Denice Murray, Chief of Staff  
Derek Hobson, Chief Deputy Director  
Lori Gray, Deputy of Permanency  
**FROM:** Desiree H. Silva, Chief Deputy Director of Operations  
**DATE:** May 21, 2020  
**RE:** Court-Ordered In-Person Visitation

The Department's guidance regarding parent-child visitation during the COVID-19 public health crisis – Action Transmittal 2020.02 (Updated) – remains in effect until further notice. Action Transmittal 2020.02 (Updated) is available on the DCFS website at [https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/aboutus/notices/Documents/AT\\_2020.02\\_-\\_Parent\\_Child\\_Sibling\\_Visitation\\_during\\_COVID-19.pdf](https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/aboutus/notices/Documents/AT_2020.02_-_Parent_Child_Sibling_Visitation_during_COVID-19.pdf).

This memo is to be used to guide DCFS and POS direct service staff on cases in which courts order in-person parent-child visitation, contrary to the guidance set forth in Action Transmittal 2020.02 (Updated). The following guidance supports compliance with a court order while promoting the safety of children, parents, and staff.

### **Following the Issuance of the Court Order:**

When a Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) receives an Order of the Court that requires facilitation of in-person supervised or unsupervised parent-child visitation, the CWS shall inform the DCFS Office of Legal Services of the order and attach a copy of the order to the email notification:

- Southern Region – Kreig Taylor ([Kreig.Taylor@illinois.gov](mailto:Kreig.Taylor@illinois.gov)), Shelia Riley ([Shelia.Riley@illinois.gov](mailto:Shelia.Riley@illinois.gov)) and Amanda Wolfman ([Amanda.Wolfman@illinois.gov](mailto:Amanda.Wolfman@illinois.gov))
- Northern Region – Monica Mosley-Cantrell ([Monica.Mosley-Cantrell@illinois.gov](mailto:Monica.Mosley-Cantrell@illinois.gov)), Shelia Riley and Amanda Wolfman

- Central Region – Susan Barker ([Susan.Barker@illinois.gov](mailto:Susan.Barker@illinois.gov)), Shelia Riley and Amanda Wolfman
- Cook County – Faith Seals ([Faith.Seals@illinois.gov](mailto:Faith.Seals@illinois.gov)) and Amanda Wolfman

The CWS should inform their direct supervisor and administrator of the order and follow the subsequent guidance.

### **Promoting Safety During Parent-Child Supervised Visitation**

The CWS should ensure that children, parents, and substitute caregivers are asked pre-screening questions regarding every member of the household prior to the visit. If any participant in the visit answers “yes” to one or both these questions, in-person visitation cannot proceed. The CWS shall document the response to the pre-screening questions in a SACWIS case note, as well as the rationale for why an in-person visit did or did not occur. If a court-ordered visit does not occur, the CWS shall immediately inform their supervisor and the DCFS Office of Legal Services (via email as identified above). The DCFS Office of Legal Services shall analyze the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and shall provide appropriate support for the CWS in court regarding any canceled visits.

Pre-screening questions are as follows:

1. Have you or anyone in your home experienced symptoms: sore throat, body aches, coughing, shortness of breath, or a fever of 100.4 °F or higher within the last 14 days?
2. Within the last 14 days, have you or anyone in your home been in close contact (closer than 6 ft for at least 15 minutes without use of a mask) with someone confirmed to have COVID-19?

The CWS shall ensure that **face coverings are always worn** by all participants in the parent-child visit. Exceptions to the use of face coverings are as follows: face coverings should not be used for children under age two, or by those who cannot remove the covering without assistance or are having difficulty breathing.

Additional guidance on face coverings can be found here:

- [IDPH: Guidance on Use of Masks by the General Public](#)
- [IDPH: Face Covering Dos and Don'ts](#)
- [CDC: Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)

Individuals attending visits shall **follow social distancing requirements** during the visit. Social distancing requirements, as defined in Executive Order 2020-32 (April 30, 2020), include maintaining at least six-foot social distance from other individuals, washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer, covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands), regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and not shaking hands. **As children may be unable to maintain social distancing, all participants shall always wear face coverings.**

Substitute caregivers should prepare children for the need to wear a face covering throughout the visit and inform them that their parent and others may also be wearing one.

To minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19, gifts and packages shall not be exchanged at visitation. Substitute caregivers should send children with snacks to avoid food sharing and unnecessary travel to businesses.

Visitation shall not take place in a setting with more than 10 people in the immediate vicinity.

Children should wash their hands before and after an in-person visit with a parent. Hand sanitizer will be available at visits.

The environment in which visitation is being held should be cleaned before and after the visit. Specific guidance is available at [CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) and [CDC: Cleaning and Disinfection for Households](#).

### **Tips for Enjoyable Supervised Parent-Child Visits**

Parents and supervisors should prepare for visitation by:

- Pre-planning activities that can be completed while maintaining social distancing (a web or social media search may assist with ideas);
- Gathering and bringing what is needed to participate in chosen activities: soccer balls, basketballs, sandbags, ground chalk, other craft or play items.

### **Promoting Safety During Parent-Child Unsupervised Visitation**

The CWS should ensure that children, parents, and substitute caregivers are asked pre-screening questions regarding **every member of the substitute caregiver and parent's household** prior to the visit. If any participant in the visit answers "yes" to one or both these

questions, in-person visitation cannot proceed. The CWS shall document the response to the pre-screening questions in a SACWIS case note, as well as the rationale for why an in-person visit did or did not occur. If a court-ordered visit does not occur, the CWS shall immediately inform their supervisor and the DCFS Office of Legal Services (via email as identified above). The DCFS Office of Legal Services shall analyze the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and shall provide appropriate support for the CWS in court regarding any canceled visits.

Pre-screening questions are as follows:

1. Have you or anyone in your home experienced symptoms: sore throat, body aches, coughing, shortness of breath, or a fever of 100.4 °F or higher within the last 14 days?
2. Within the last 14 days, have you or anyone in your home been in close contact (closer than 6 ft for at least 15 minutes without use of a mask) with someone confirmed to have COVID-19?

**The CWS shall inform parents that face coverings are required to be worn by all participants** who may attend the unsupervised parent-child visit. Exceptions to the use of face coverings are as follows: face coverings should not be used for children under age two, or by individuals who cannot remove the covering without assistance or are having difficulty breathing.

**The CWS shall verbally inform parents** of the following guidance on face coverings, and that it can be found here:

- [IDPH: Guidance on Use of Masks by the General Public](#)
- [IDPH: Face Covering Dos and Don'ts](#)
- [CDC: Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)

**Parents shall be informed** that visitation shall not take place in a setting with more than 10 people in the immediate vicinity, and that all individuals attending their unsupervised visit shall **follow social distancing requirements** during the visit. Social distancing requirements, as defined in Executive Order 2020-32 (April 30, 2020), include maintaining at least six-foot social distancing from other individuals, washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer, covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands), regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and not shaking

hands. **As children may be unable to maintain social distancing, all individuals having contact with their children during unsupervised visits shall always wear face coverings.**

**The CWS shall inform parents** that their children should wash their hands before, and at the conclusion of their unsupervised visitation. The environment in which visitation is being held should be cleaned before and after the visit, and that specific guidance is available at [CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) and [CDC: Cleaning and Disinfection for Households](#).

To minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19, parents should be informed that gifts and packages shall not be exchanged at visitation.

### **Transportation to Supervised and Unsupervised Visitation**

The CWS shall ask the transporter (case aide or service provider) the pre-screening questions and document the response in a SACWIS case note. In the event the transporter is the assigned CWS, the Supervisor shall ask the CWS the pre-screening questions and document the responses in a SACWIS case note. The approved transporter shall wash their hands before and after visits, and wear face coverings throughout transportation and the visit. If possible, the transporter should maintain distance inside the vehicle.

Transporters, or parents who are transporting their children, shall clean/sanitize their car, including car seats, before and after transport. Specific guidance is available at [CDC: Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-emergency Transport Vehicles](#).

Agencies are responsible for ensuring that case aides and contractual transportation providers have the necessary PPE and disinfectants to facilitate in-person visitation in accordance with the above.