Illinois Department of

DCFS

Children & Family Services

JB Pritzker
Governor

Marc D. Smith
Acting Director

Update to Visitation Practices During COVID-19
June 15th, 2020

DCFS has worked closely with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) throughout the COVID-19 crisis and on March 27, 2020, we made the difficult decision to modify visitation procedures to ensure the health of children, foster families, parents and caseworkers are protected during the COVID-19 crisis. As this health crisis has evolved, so has our response. We know that contact between children and their families is incredibly important. Working closely with IDPH, we have announced we are resuming modified visitations, implementing a staged approach with safety precautions as outlined below.

For Parent-Child Visitation:

Stage 1: Beginning June 15, 2020, the caseworker will begin preparing the parent, child and foster parents for resuming in-person parent-child visitation.

Stage 2: Beginning June 22, 2020, the Child and Family Team Meeting will be held to provide an opportunity for families and service providers to communicate and work together in the best interest of the child. The caseworker will plan, with the team, for any arrangements for the visits and any special considerations that need to be taken into account.

For children with complex medical issues, the initial meeting will include a healthcare provider or medical professional who is knowledgeable about the child's medical condition and can provide a medical opinion as to the safety of the child participating in parent-child visitation.

Stage 3: Resuming In-Person Parent-Child Visitations and Sibling Visitations

Beginning June 26, 2020, In-person parent-child visitations will resume every other week with sibling visits resuming July 15, 2020.

The following are safety precautions to be followed during visitation:

- Caseworkers will ask you Pre-Screening Questions about all members of your household.

- All parties will be expected to wear face coverings that cover the nose and the mouth. Exceptions to the use of face coverings are: children under the age of two, individuals who cannot remove the covering without assistance and individuals whose face covering obstructs breathing. There may be other circumstances that make it difficult for a person to wear a face covering (e.g., sensory challenges, hyperactive children, children with intellectual disabilities). In these circumstances, the caseworker shall make accommodations as needed to ensure a visit takes place.

- Visitation will not take place in a setting with more than ten (10) people in the immediate area.

- All individuals attending visits will follow social distancing requirements during the visit. Social distancing requirements include maintaining at least six feet apart from other individuals, washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty (20) seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer, covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands), regularly cleaning surfaces touched by many people and no shaking hands.

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Stage 4: Resuming Weekly Supervised Parent-Child Visitation

Beginning July 15, 2020, the restart of weekly supervised parent-child visitation will be decided on a regional basis, according to the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* and the *Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).*

Transportation to and from Visitation

Transporters, or parents who are transporting their children, will clean/disinfect their car, including car seats, before and after transport and without occupants in the vehicle, using manufacturer's guidelines for CDC approved products. Products should not be used in the presence of children to minimize possible respiratory reactions.

DCFS will continue to monitor developments about the spread of the coronavirus disease using current health data to help us plan.

If you are a parent and have questions about the plan, please contact your case manager. If you are a foster parent with questions, please contact the DCFS Central Office of Licensing at 217-785-2688.

rev Jun 22, 2020