

Child Welfare Services (CWS) Visitation Guidelines Related to COVID-19

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Guidance for Exercising Discretion to Allow and/or Facilitate In-Person Visitation between Children, Parents, and Siblings

As a reminder to staff, the current visitation order suspends all in-person visitation between children and parents, guardians, and siblings. Workers must evaluate and assess each case to determine if in-person visitation can be accomplished in a reasonably safe manner. This document includes guidelines that workers should consider when conducting this assessment. If in-person visitation is determined to not be detrimental to any of the involved individuals, this document also provides information about safety precautions that should be implemented for visits.

Factors to Consider to Allow In-Person Visitation:

- What is the status of the case (FM, PP, FR) - Family reunification cases should be considered priority for in-person visitation.
- Are the children placed with relative caregivers? If yes, they may be more willing to support in-person visitation.
- If the child is placed at home (FM or 60 day trial visit), consider the health of both the parent and other household members with whom the child resides and the other parent who wants to visit.
- Does the caregiver have concerns about the child coming back from visits and potentially getting others in the caregivers' home sick? Is the caregiver unwilling to maintain placement of the child if in-person visitation occurs?
- Does the child already have unsupervised/overnight visitation? If so, assess to determine if the child(ren) can go on an extended visit or begin a 60-day trial visit.
- Age of the child: Younger children may need more in-person contact to maintain attachment and relationships with siblings and parents.
- Will in-person sibling visits support their relationship?
- Does the child have any health concerns (medically fragile/already ill)? If so, consider alternative options.
- Does the parent/sibling have any underlying health conditions that may put them at risk? If so, consider alternative options.
- Does the caregiver have any underlying health conditions or is 65 years old or older? If so, consider alternative options.

Preparing for Supervised, In-Person Visitation:

- Work with parents, caregiver, and child/youth to create a consistent schedule.
 - Frequency and duration may need to be modified/adjusted.
 - Determine the location of the visit as many places where visits normally occur, such as parks, libraries and centers, are closed. Consider visits at the caregivers' home, as appropriate, as well as CWS offices.
- Remind parents of the purpose of visitation.
- Advise parents that they should not bring any items from home, including food, to the visit during this time.

- Remind all parties that they will need to wear a facial covering during the visit.
- Request that the caregiver provide the social worker a diaper bag and/or change of clothing for the child/youth to be utilized at the conclusion of the visit.
- On the day of the visit, the social worker will call ahead to screen all parties for risk of COVID-19 using the following questions:
 - Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing?
 - In the last 14 days, have you come into close contact with someone who is known to have COVID-19?
 - In the last 14 days, have you traveled to an area with widespread, ongoing COVID-19 transmission? [Click here for the most recent list from the CDC](#)
 - If anyone screens as at-risk, refer them to their primary care physician and 211 and reschedule the visit. Arrange for virtual visits and phone calls in the meantime.

Transportation to the Visit:

- Arrange for the caregiver to bring the child/youth to the visit as often as possible.
- If caregivers are not willing to transport, CWS staff will be responsible for transporting the child/youth.

During the Visit:

- Ensure all parties are wearing a facial covering.
- Ask all parties to wash their hands before the visit, per CDC guidelines (20 seconds with soap and water).
- Provide and encourage the use of hand sanitizer during the visit.
- If a parent/sibling appears to be ill/sick upon arrival or during the visitation, stop the visit and refer the person who is sick to their primary care physician or 2-1-1 San Diego. Let them know visits can be rescheduled once everyone is healthy. Arrange for virtual visits and phone calls in the meantime.
- Consult with the PSS immediately if anyone is sick

After the Visit:

- Ask all parties to wash their hands after the visit.
- For infants and young children who cannot wash their hands, the social worker will assist with wiping down the child's hands and face.
- Prior to taking the child back to the caregiver's home, the social worker will change the child's clothes or have the child change their clothes if they are old enough, (and diaper, based on age of the child) with supplies provided by the caregiver.
- Ensure everyone knows the date, time, and location of the next visit.
- Discuss the use of videoconferencing/telephone contact between visits. Ask the parent/siblings if they have access to the equipment to participate in videoconferencing.
- Ask all parties to inform the social worker immediately if anyone develops cold or flu like symptoms.
- Clean the visit room after the visit, using disinfecting wipes and/or spray.

Visits at Polinsky Children's Center (PCC):

- Scheduler will screen all parties for risk of COVID-19 the day of the visit and will check visitors for fever upon arrival at the facility.
 - If anyone screens at risk, refer them to their primary care physician and 211 and reschedule the visit. Arrange for virtual visits and phone calls in the meantime.
- Follow hand washing and cleaning protocols as above for before, during, and after the visit.

Unsupervised Visitation:

- Work with parents, caregiver, and child/youth to create a consistent schedule.
 - Frequency and duration may need to be modified/adjusted
 - Determine how long the unsupervised visit will be for and the location at which it will take place
 - Assess if the location is safe for the child/youth to be at
 - Offer parents to have unsupervised visits at the CWS office if they do not have another safe location
 - Ask the parents to identify anyone else who will be around the child during the visit so that they can be screened
 - Remind all parties that they will need to wear a facial covering during the visit
- On the day of the visit, the social worker will call ahead to screen all parties for risk of COVID-19 using the following questions:
 - Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing?
 - In the last 14 days, have you come into close contact with someone who is known to have COVID-19?
 - In the last 14 days, have you traveled to an area with widespread, ongoing COVID-19 transmission? [Click here for the most recent list from the CDC](#)
 - If anyone screens at risk, refer them to their primary care physician and 211 and reschedule the visit. Arrange for virtual visits and phone calls in the meantime.
- Remind the parents of the following good hygiene practices that should be implemented during the visit:
 - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - Wearing a facial covering during the visit.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Stay home when you are sick and ask that your visit be rescheduled so that you do not infect others.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze, with a tissue if possible, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces often.

After the Visit:

- Ask the caregiver to make sure the child washes their hands thoroughly with soap and water after returning from the visit.
- Have the caregiver change the child or have the child change immediately upon returning from the visit.
- Ensure everyone knows the date, time, and location of the next visit.

- Discuss the use of videoconferencing/telephone contact between visits. Ask the parent/siblings if they have access to the equipment to participate in videoconferencing.
- Ask all parties to inform the social worker immediately if anyone develops cold or flu like symptoms.