

Caseworker's Role in Preparing Parents for In-Person Visits

Before resuming parent-child supervised visitation, the caseworker should inform the parent of the safeguards and visitation guidelines that are being put in place to ensure a safe and successful visitation for all involved. The caseworker should be prepared to hear the parent's concerns related to COVID-19 and the public health crisis, and the parent's possible concerns related to their child's health and wellbeing while not in substitute care.

The caseworker should "normalize" concerns related to COVID-19 and ensure that the parent is aware of the precautions being taken to ensure the health and wellbeing of all involved in facilitating their visitation with their child.

The caseworker should take special note of any parent with at-risk health conditions and inform the parent that the worker will assist them in developing a plan for accommodations so that they can resume visitation with their child.

The caseworker should inform the parent that they will be invited to a Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) using video or phone conferencing. They should be informed that the CFTM will also include the substitute care giver, supportive individuals, the supervisor of the visit, and the child(ren) (as age appropriate). The worker should explain all that will be reviewed in the CFTM: the importance of the pre-screening questions; visitation guidelines; that face coverings to and during visitation are being mandated; and that if anyone attends visitation ill, it will be cancelled. The parent should be informed that they or their child are determined to be ill during a visit, the visit will immediately be cancelled and rescheduled. Parents should be informed that there may be occasions when visitation may need to be rescheduled due to illness, and that if this occurs, the visit will be "made up" and facilitated at a different time.

With regard to children who are medically complex, the parent should be informed that healthcare providers or medical professionals who are knowledgeable about the child's medical condition will be invited to the CFTM to provide a medical opinion as to the safety of the child participating in parent-child visitation. Parents should be informed that if in-person visitation is not in the medical best interest of their child at any time, visitation will be accommodated using phone and video conferencing.

The caseworker should engage the parent in preparing the child for their visit, and ask that they also explain to the child the need to wear a face covering throughout the visit.

To minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19, parents should be informed that gifts and packages shall not be exchanged. Instead the parent should be encouraged to bring familiar or favorite toys with which the child can play during the visit. If this occurs, the toys should be washed or disinfected before and after the visit.

The following **Tips for Enjoyable Supervised Parent-Child Visits** should be shared with the parents:

- 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.
- Bringing snacks to avoid food sharing and unnecessary travel to businesses.

During the preparation meeting with the parent, the caseworker should ensure that:

- the parent has an opportunity to be informed and equipped with the resources below;
- that the parent has an opportunity to be heard; and
- that the parent has an opportunity to have their concerns addressed before visitation resumes.

Providing the parent with sufficient time to ask questions and prepare for visitation is important, and educating the parent related to COVID-19 is essential. The worker and parent having a common understanding of the guidelines and how they safeguard the child's wellbeing lends to a successful visit for all.

Resources:

- [IDPH: Guidance on Use of Masks by the General Public](#)
- [IDPH: COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Tips](#)
- [IDPH: Face Covering Dos and Don'ts](#)
- [CDC: Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)
- [CDC: Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-emergency Transport Vehicles.](#)