



## Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

### Visitation Protocol During Covid-19 Situation

Parent-child visitation is a critical and important activity to keep children in out-of-home care connected to their families. It is important that we maintain our responsibilities associated with facilitating parent-child visits while also looking out for everyone's health and safety.

This guidance does not pertain to parent-child visits that occur in the homes of relatives or other caregivers. It is intended as guidance for parent-child visits that DFPS or a contracted visitation provider supervises. Visits may no longer take place in public settings such as restaurants or parks. If we have a court order to hold visits at a specific public site, we need to consult with our attorney. All visits will be held at DFPS offices or at the offices of visitation contractors.

All participants in a visit must thoroughly wash their hands or use an appropriate hand sanitizer solution of at least 60% alcohol at the beginning and end of the visit.

Surfaces in the visitation area, to include **tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, should** be cleaned at the beginning and end of every visit. Options for appropriate disinfection can be found under the Clean and Disinfect heading on this CDC webpage:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

Excepting for court ordered persons, only parents and siblings will be allowed to attend family visits. Extended family members and friends will be excluded unless court ordered otherwise.

Prior to visitation, we should contact the parties and inquire:

- In the past 14 days have you experienced any of the following symptoms: cough, fever, shortness of breath, body aches, difficulty breathing?
- In the past 14 days have you:
  - Been in contact with a person infected with novel corona virus (COVID-19)?

- Been to one of the affected countries or regions listed as a Level 3 health notice (please see <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>)
- Been to a health care facility (hospital, walk-in clinic, emergency room) where people infected with COVID-19 are treated?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, please discuss the need to reschedule visitation in order to keep their child(ren) safe and healthy.

Anyone exhibiting the symptoms noted above should not be participating in visits.

In situations where parents or children have underlying health conditions or are considered at high risk or children have medical conditions that warrant extra precautions, we should explore technology options for visitation – i.e. Skype, Facetime. This includes children with complex or primary medical needs. High risk individuals include: people 65 years or older, and/or people with medical issues, like heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, or a weakened immune system. We should consult with our attorney if this would be a change to court ordered visitation.

