

DCF Supervised Visitation Providers' (SVP) Services During COVID-19 Pandemic

DCF Supervised Visitation Providers are to follow the March 23, 2020 Interim Guidance for DCF Support & Stabilization Providers. The following material supplements the March 23, 2020 Interim Guidance, which is for all Support & Stabilization providers, with specific information related to supervised visitation services.

In-Person Visitation

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, DCF is encouraging video conference visitation for parents and children whenever possible. However, there will be circumstances in which in-person visitation is needed. DCF supervisors and managers are approving any in-person visits. Social workers have been instructed to ask screening questions before any in-person visit occurs and to take precautions, like maintaining distance and utilizing personal protective equipment (PPE) when appropriate.

Use of Virtual Visitation – Alternative Services Provided by SVPs

Guidelines for facilitating virtual visitation:

- SVP coordinates virtual visitation time with child's caregiver, child (if age and developmentally appropriate), and parent/family member.
- SVP facilitates the communication through modeling, coaching, and providing supportive counseling before, during, and after the virtual visit to both the child and parent/family member/caregiver.

Tips for serving as liaison between child and parent/family member to supplement virtual visitation or instead of virtual visitation if it is not possible to arrange:

- Provide supplies (e.g., cards, stationery, pens, envelopes, colored markers) to child and parent/family member.
- Provide phone or video conference support, as needed, to child and parent/family member about what to include in cards, letters, artwork.
- Pick up cards/letters from child and parent/family member, address them, and mail them. Or, include a self-addressed (to you), postage paid envelope in which parent or child sends materials to you, which you then send to their family member.
- Obtain electronic pictures of the child from the child's caregiver and send them to parent/family member electronically or print them out and send them electronically. Do the same in sharing pictures of the parent/family member with the child.
- Investigate online interactive options, such as playing cards or games, that child and parent/caregiver might engage in to supplement virtual visitation time.

Guidelines for supporting child and parent/family member when in-person visits are not possible due to the need to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.:

- Provide supportive counseling to children to address feelings of sadness, disappointment or anger that accompany changes in the routine of having in person contact with family members.
- Provide the same supportive counseling to parent/family members
- Support the family by discussing alternatives to in-person visits such as those listed above.