



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: County Children and Youth Agencies
Private Children and Youth Social Services Agencies
Child Welfare Service Providers

FROM: Jonathan Rubin 
Deputy Secretary for Children, Youth and Families

RE: Visitor, Meeting and Travel Guidance
During Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

ISSUED: March 26, 2020

EFFECTIVE: IMMEDIATELY

In response to growing concerns about the spread of COVID-19 and guidance issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF) has developed the following recommendations for entities operating as a Child Residential and Day Treatment Facility licensed under Title 55 Chapter 3800.

Visitors

Residential Areas

1. It is recommended that all non-employee visitors be prohibited and alternative methods of communication (video conferencing, telephone calls) be utilized unless it is a medical necessity, required by court order, or necessary to ensure completion of duties for child welfare and juvenile probation agencies as outlined in the Child Protective Services Law regarding the safety and protection of a child.
 - a. Exceptions should be provided for immediate family members. In addition to the exception for immediate family members, the above policy allows for visits by County Child Welfare or DHS staff, Behavioral Health Managed Care staff or Juvenile Probation Officers, if the following conditions are met:
 - i. If the visit is deemed to be necessary, it is recommended that prior approval by the facility director be required;
 - ii. Consideration should be given to designating a specific location for the visit where safe distance protocols can be met;
 - iii. Each visit should be limited to the specific person of the intended visit.
 - iv. It is recommended that visitors be screened using the guidance outlined in the “Long-Term Care Facility Visitation Guidance” provided by the Department of Health. The guidance can be found [here](#);

- v. If a person fails the screening, that person should be prohibited from remaining on campus;
 - vi. Have hand washing station(s) and/or hand sanitizer easily accessible to visitors;
 - vii. Consistently sanitize/clean visitation areas; especially high touch areas;
 - viii. Stagger visitations to limit the number of visitors in the facility at one time. No more than two visitors should be allowed at any one time regardless of the purpose.
 - ix. A questionnaire should be completed for each visit which includes the date, location, time in, time out, the person being visited, the person visiting and the person completing the screening;
 - x. If someone is turned away, providers should make every effort to conduct video conferencing visits. If video conferencing is not available, additional/daily phone contact should be allowed/considered;
 - xi. Provider agencies should ensure there is a designated family contact for questions/issues related to visitation; and
 - xii. Family members, counties and Behavioral Health Managed Care Organizations are to be notified of changes to a provider's visitation policy related to COVID 19.
2. All employee access should be restricted to work related activities only.

Campus

3. Vendors/Deliveries

- a. Should be limited when possible to specific non-residential locations, as deemed by the facility, and should minimize contact with people living and working at the facility.
 - i. Daily screening using the guidance outlined in the "Long-Term Care Facility Visitation Guidance" provided by the Department of Health is recommended. The guidance can be found [here](#).
 - ii. A questionnaire should be completed for each delivery which includes the date, location, time in, time out, the person receiving the delivery, reason, and the person completing the screening.
 - iii. If the person fails the screening, the person should be prohibited from remaining on campus and the physical delivery should be refused unless it is an essential item. If the item is deemed essential, appropriate safeguards including cleaning the surface of the item and hand washing with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds by anyone who touches the item should be used in the handling of the delivery.

4. Volunteers and Groups

- a. Are prohibited from visiting the campus.

Trainings/Meetings

On-Campus

1. All trainings and meetings should be held by phone or video conferencing.

Off Campus

1. All off campus training and meeting attendance should be prohibited.
 - a. Telephone or other technology should be used as appropriate to take the place of face to face trainings and meetings.
 - b. An exception can be made if the trip is deemed to be critically necessary and approved by the facility director.
 - i. Each training/meeting should be limited to the minimum number of staff required.
 - ii. A training/meeting form should be completed for each exception which includes the date, training/meeting attending, time departed, time returned, attendees, reason, location and person completing the form.
 - iii. Individuals displaying signs of respiratory illness should be prohibited from in-person participation.

Trips

1. All trips including staff and residents from the facility should be restricted unless they are a medical necessity or ordered by a court
2. An exception will be made if the trip is deemed to be critically necessary and approved by the facility director.
 - i. Each trip should be limited to the specific person and the minimum number of staff required.
 - ii. A trip form should be completed for each trip which includes the date, time left, time returned, location, reason, attendees, and the person completing the form.
 - iii. The trip form should also indicate if there was contact with anyone that was displaying signs of a respiratory illness.

With the Governor's authorization as conferred in the Proclamation of Disaster Emergency issued on March 6, 2020, all statutory and regulatory provisions that would impose an impediment to implementing this guidance are suspended. Those suspensions will remain in place while the proclamation of disaster emergency remains in effect.

Please direct any questions regarding this guidance to your Office of Children, Youth, and Families [Regional Office](#). Additional COVID-19 related resources for providers is also available through the DHS [website](#).

- c: Natalie Bates, Chief of Staff, OCYF
- Jennie Pettet, Director, OCYF Bureau of Children and Family Services
- Gloria Gilligan, Director, OCYF Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Support
- Amanda Dorris, Director, OCYF Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations
- Charles Neff, Director, OCYF Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services
- Amber Kalp, Regional Director, Western OCYF
- Jacquelyn Maddon, Regional Director, Northeast OCYF
- Gabrielle Williams, Regional Director, Central OCYF
- Shelly Neptune, Acting Regional Director, Southeast OCYF