

March 23, 2020

**Children & Family Services Division
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions**

Q1 We are a private agency contracted to provide specific services to NDDHS clients. What are our responsibilities in light of the current COVID-19 crisis?

- Contact your contract manager at DHS to discuss specifics.
- In general, and unless otherwise advised by your contract manager, the NDDHS would anticipate services to continue to be provided throughout the duration of the COVID-19 crisis. Guidelines for screening prior to in-home visits should be conducted and appropriate safety precautions by staff are expected. Programs are issuing guidance regarding such screening and safety precautions.
- Agencies are expected to allow for and support staff to work from home, as necessary and indicated.

Q2 Now that monthly required face to face visitations are being allowed to be completed temporarily via videoconferencing, how do we ensure quality visitation?

For quality monthly case worker visitation, much of the same methods can be utilized that are used when the visit is done in-person face to face.

Basic questions would still be asked of the youth in the areas of feeling safe, health/medication, activities they are involved in, contact with family, how school is going, progress on treatment plan etc. These questions can be broken down further into areas concerning the youth's well-being, safety and permanence.

For monthly visitation of foster children, please see the attached document "[North Dakota Foster Care Monthly Face To Face](#)." It will give you further ideas of what you may want to cover during the visitation.

The case worker can still ask to have a private conversation with the youth as age appropriate, so that the youth is comfortable to speak freely, even though is more difficult to monitor via videoconferencing.

For visits with young children (including infants) by electronic means, children should be observed awake and, if possible, in some activity so that you can assess their well-being. Even very young children today have had experiences in interacting with others via Facetime. Very young children can also be asked simple questions regarding their safety and well-being via electronic means, just as you would when visiting in the home.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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