

TO: ALL DCS Staff

FROM: Jennifer S. Nichols, Commissioner
Children's Services

DATE: March 19, 2020

SUBJECT: Procedures Governing Face to Face Videoconferencing

Jerry Milner, Associate Commissioner for the Children's Bureau, has provided guidelines for conducting face to face visits for Child Welfare Case Managers in light of the extraordinary circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Videoconferencing will be allowed for all face to face visits including all program areas with the following exceptions:

- CPSA and CPSI initial priority responses
- Continued safety concerns exist in the home
- **When a Juvenile Justice youth is transitioning home from an out of home placement to a trial home visit**
- Foster parents, biological parents, caregivers do not have videoconferencing capabilities

When the family does not have videoconferencing capabilities, conduct screening questions and consult with supervisor.

Screening procedures:

Before conducting any home visit, the DCS case worker will telephone the home in order to screen it with the following questions.

- Have you or anyone else in your home had contact within the last fourteen days with any person under investigation for COVID-19, or with anyone with known or suspected COVID-19?
- Do you or does anyone else in your home have any symptoms of a respiratory infection, for example, cough, sore throat, fever (over 100.4), or shortness of breath?

If the answer to either question is "Yes,"

- Instruct the individual to remain at home and contact their healthcare provider immediately.
- In all circumstances above, please instruct the client or family member to notify the receiving healthcare provider and transporter in advance of potential concern for COVID-19.
- Notify supervision for any further instruction regarding the foster child/children in home.

CFTMS and all meetings with children, youth, and families are required to be conducted by videoconferencing.

Parent/Child Visitation and Sibling Visitation will be conducted via videoconferencing to include Therapeutic Visitation.

Please consult with Legal if there is a court order which dictates/outlines parameters of visit. An agreed order may need to be pursued pending legal consult.

CPSA/CPSI may utilize Facetime/Skype to meet priority response for those cases they are unable to respond to in person and where there are other professional partners with the child(ren) such as hospital staff or provider staff. When response is met by videoconferencing, use the following documentation:

- *Due to the State of Emergency Declaration by the Governor of the State of Tennessee regarding the COVID-19 Virus, the case manager conducted a face to face visit with the child by _____ (example: Face time, Skype, etc.) due to the child being in a safe environment, such as in the care of professional staff (i.e. hospitals, provider, etc.).*
- Staff will clearly document efforts to assess the child's safety in the home/placement environment including interviewing the child separately and privately.
- Be sure to check the box indicating videoconferencing in TFACTS to ensure the F2F contact has been accurately captured. Please see attached story board.

For all other visits met utilizing videoconferencing use the following documentation:

- *Due to the State of Emergency Declaration by the Governor of the State of Tennessee regarding the COVID-19 Virus, the case manager conducted a face to face visit with the child by _____ (example: Face time, Skype, etc.).*
- Staff will clearly document efforts to assess the child's safety in the home/placement environment including interviewing the child separately and privately.
- Be sure to check the box indicating videoconferencing in TFACTS to ensure the F2F contact has been accurately captured. Please see attached story board.

These guidelines will remain in effect until further notice is provided. It is imperative we continue to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of our children and youth while they are in our care. We appreciate all you do to this end and thank you for your ongoing dedication and commitment to this essential and meaningful work.