



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON
DIRECTOR

March 19, 2020

Dear Caregivers,

As we face a pandemic unlike many of us have seen before, I want to assure you that the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recognizes and appreciates the dedication, sacrifice and commitment you have shown during this difficult time. You are a vital part of the work we do every day and it is because of families like yours that Michigan can continue to provide safe and loving homes for children in the foster care system.

I recognize how difficult this time is for your family and know that you are working diligently to ensure the safety and well-being of your family, including the children in your care. The safety and health of your family, the children in your care, their parents, and our child welfare workforce remains my top priority.

I've heard your concerns about visits and wanted to provide you with some guidance on home visits and parenting time. Starting immediately, until at least April 6, 2020, caseworker's visits to your home have been suspended, unless absolutely necessary and we appreciate your patience when it is deemed necessary. Instead of coming to your home, your caseworker will contact you through phone calls, Skype, Facetime, or other technology that allows them to verify child safety and address your questions and concerns.

Regarding parent and sibling visits, starting immediately, until at least April 6, 2020, these visits are not required to occur in person. Your caseworker will contact you to determine if these visits will occur in person or by phone, Skype, Facetime or other available technology, which may include more frequent contact. If you, your worker and the parents agree to having in-person parent and sibling visits, these visits may still occur provided everyone in your home and the child's parent's home, are pre-screened and answer "no" to the following questions:

1. Is there any reason you have been instructed to self-quarantine or isolate? If yes, why?
2. Have you had contact with any Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) for COVID-19 within the last 14 days, OR with anyone with confirmed COVID-19?
3. Do you have any symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g., cough, sore throat, fever, or shortness of breath)?

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If an in-person visit can occur, conducting the visit outdoors should be explored as an alternative to an indoor visit. You may also bring freshly sanitized toys/activities for use during the visit.

I wanted to let you know that the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has developed an online map of locations where meals are being provided during this period of school closure. The map can be found at: <https://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/schoolnutrition/>, and will be updated twice each day during the closure period.

I encourage you to regularly check <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> for updated information from CDC and <http://michigan.gov/coronavirus> for updates from MDHHS.

We at MDHHS have implemented a statewide hotline for questions regarding COVID-19, which will be open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can reach the hotline at 1-888-535-6136. You can also send questions to: COVID19@michigan.gov.

Many thanks for ensuring that children in your care are safe and for your kindness to them, their families and their workers. Please know that we are working to balance the safety and well-being of the children in your care and your family with the safety and well-being of their family and our workforce during this very challenging time. I am confident that we will get through this difficult time by working together.

Sincerely,

Joo Chang

JooYeun Chang, Executive Director
Children's Services Agency