

March 23, 2020

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

**NOTE:** For the purposes of this FAQ the term ‘parent’ refers to the person(s) with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). Other non-custodial biological parents may also be applicable depending on the circumstances of the case.

**Q1 Are children and parents receiving services through In-Home still going to have face-to-face visitation with caseworkers?**

Face-to-face visitation to ensure a child’s safety and well-being is still best practice AND will continue whenever possible. However, it is understood that this may not be possible in all scenarios because of illness, social distancing considerations, and/or quarantine.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face visits will only be limited in situations that are beyond the control of the caseworker, child, or family such as a declaration of an emergency that prohibits or strongly discourages person-to-person contact for public health reasons; a child, parent, or caseworker whose severe health condition warrants limiting person-to-person contact; and other similar public or individual health challenges.

Even in the face of such challenges, agencies must find ways to continue to comply with the monthly caseworker visit requirement.

**Q2 Can caseworkers use technology to complete face-to-face visits with children and parents?**

Videoconferencing software can be used under these limited, specified circumstances. Caseworkers must closely assess the child(ren)’s safety at each conference. Also, agencies must have plans of action in place should a caseworker not be able to reach child(ren) or parent(s) via videoconference, or should the videoconference raise a concern about the child’s safety or well-being.

Elements of quality visitation with children and parents are outlined in the **PI-11-06** and **PI-11-07** remain the expectation for videoconference visits. (<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/641/641.htm>; PIs; Outstanding PIs).

**Documentation Example:** This visitation can still be entered into the FRAME system under “face to face” but the note could indicate “Unable to complete face-to-face this month due to COVID-19. Skype call completed with child(ren) and parent(s).”

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

600 E Boulevard Ave Dept 325 | Bismarck ND 58505-0250

701.328.3541 | Fax 701.328.3538 | 800.755.2604 | 711 (TTY) | [www.nd.gov/dhs](http://www.nd.gov/dhs)

**Q3 Do we need to do Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs)?**

While in person meetings are best practice when possible, currently alternative meeting methods are acceptable that are non-public facing remote communication. This includes telephonic, Zoom, Skype, video conferencing etc. Documentation of the meeting should continue as in the past.

**Q4 Will Family Centered Engagement (FCE) meetings continue?**

The Village will continue to provide FCE meetings with the safety of both staff and families in mind. At this time the Village continues to keep its doors open to clients at all the ND Village locations with the exception of the Bismarck office. However, in locations where the Village does not have offices it is becoming difficult to find available locations to hold FCE meetings. Each local FCE facilitator will coordinate with human service zone workers and juvenile court to determine the best plan for each individual FCE case referral.

The Village is well equipped to provide FCE meetings both in person and remotely via Zoom and/or telephone. If it is determined an FCE meeting will be done in person, the number of attendees will be limited to the parents and referring worker with all other supports both formal and informal connected remotely via Zoom and/or telephone. At the meeting social distancing will be practiced. If it is determined the FCE meeting will be done remotely the facilitator will work with all parties to set up the meeting via Zoom and/or telephone.