



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH & WELFARE**

BRAD LITTLE – GOVERNOR  
DAVE JEPPESEN – DIRECTOR

MIREN M. UNSWORTH – Administrator  
DIVISION OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
450 West State Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0036  
PHONE 208-334-5700  
FAX 208-332-7330

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Child Welfare Professionals

**FROM:** Miren Unsworth, Division Administrator 

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 and Parent/Child Visitation

Over the past several days, we have seen our state and federal governments take unprecedented measures to mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). As you are aware, information regarding COVID-19 is changing rapidly and we are working closely with our state and federal partners, as well as the local Health Districts to obtain the most current information. Of utmost importance to us all is the health and safety of the children and families we serve. Social distancing is a concept being heavily advised in all realms of life while our country is attempting to “flatten the curve” of this pandemic. As a result, supervised visitation between parents, children, and siblings will no longer occur in person but rather will occur via electronic method (such as Skype, FaceTime, or other available videoconferencing technology). Telephonic visitations can be utilized but only upon supervisory approval. This procedure is effective immediately and will remain in effect until April 3, 2020, at which time it will be reconsidered as the health crisis requires.

Unsupervised visitation can continue and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Negotiations between social workers, parents, and resource parents regarding frequency, duration, and location will be necessary and will require supervisory approval. Additionally, an agreement by visitation participants to abide by CDC recommendations for personal and environmental cleanliness is necessary to safeguard the health and safety of children and families.

Family and Community Services has developed protocol and guidance to help guide our staff, parents, and resource parents with how to navigate these difficult and confusing times while also ensuring the health and safety of children, families, resource parents, and staff is not compromised. Additionally, it will be important for all parties involved (social workers, parents, resource parents) to have consistent communication that is respectful and flexible, knowing that negotiations will be necessary.

These are difficult times for our community. We want to assure you that Family and Community Services leadership is continuing to monitor any new developments about the spread of COVID-19 and will keep you apprised of any other significant changes to our practice guidelines as they come.