

 <p>Children's Services Agency</p> <p>Communication Issuance</p> <p>20-139</p>	Subject/Title	COVID-19 Response - Face Mask Requirements During In Person Contact
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The use of face masks when gathering, which includes in person visits, service delivery, parenting time, and sibling visits, will help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and keep families and staff safe. The guidelines below apply to children's protective services (CPS), foster care, juvenile justice, licensing, adoption, and specialty positions (HLOs, MYOI, Education Planners, etc.). The guidelines also apply to any Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) contractor or provider engaging in in-person visits, service delivery, or parenting time. Providers and contractors include, but are not limited to, state and county family preservation staff, Foster Care Supportive Visitation providers, staff within Post Adoption Resource Centers, Adoption Resource Centers, and Regional Resource Teams.

Face Mask Requirements when Gathering Staff, Contractors, and Service Providers

Staff, contractors, and service providers are REQUIRED to wear a face mask indoors and outdoors, whether the meeting or visit occurs in a residential or non-residential setting.

- The face mask should effectively cover the mouth and nose and should be paired with staff and service providers maintaining at least six (6) feet social distancing with other participants.
- Staff should bring a supply of new disposable face masks with them to all gatherings to offer to participants and attendees who may not have one.

Indoor Non-Residential Gatherings

A face mask that effectively covers the mouth and nose is REQUIRED for all individuals engaging in indoor visits, meetings, and service delivery that occurs in a non-residential setting (e.g. office, restaurant, library, etc.).

- Participants should be contacted prior to the meeting and informed of the requirement. Staff should bring extra face masks to the meeting to offer to others. If after encouragement and education, a participant is unwilling or unable to wear a face mask, caseworkers, staff, and

service providers should consider and discuss allowable alternatives to the in person contact with their supervisor, such as convening the meeting outdoors (with social distancing) or virtually.

Indoor Residential and Outdoor Gatherings

A mask that effectively covers the mouth and nose is **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** for individuals engaging in visits in the family home or any outdoor in person visits and meetings. This includes visits with caseworkers, staff, and service providers or parenting time with children visiting from other households. Children under age two and an individual with a valid, written medical exception are excluded.

- To the extent feasible, social distancing of at least six (6) feet should occur among participants, except for children visiting their parents or siblings visiting one another.
- Participants should be informed prior to the visit that face masks are strongly encouraged. Caseworkers, staff, and service providers should provide encouragement and share educational material on the benefits of face masks to assure everyone's safety from spread of COVID-19.
- The visit in the home or outdoors may still occur if family members decline to wear a face mask.

NOTE: When necessary to investigate or respond to a safety concern, caseworkers must conduct in person visits in the home, regardless of whether individuals present wear face masks. Caseworkers must take precautions to protect themselves, including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), limiting time indoors to only what is necessary, social distancing, avoiding indoor talking/loud talking, limiting the number of individuals who are present within the indoor space, and practicing hand hygiene.

Mitigating Risk During Gatherings

To mitigate risk during gatherings, including parent/child visits, caseworkers and service providers should:

1) Screen all participants.

- **Screenings completed with “no” responses** – Ensure the following screening questions are asked of all involved participants/case members and inquired of for each participant's household members prior to in person contact:
 - Is there any reason you have been instructed to self-quarantine or isolate? If yes, why?
 - 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?
 - Do you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., cough, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, new loss of taste or smell, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea)?
 - Are you waiting for results of a COVID-19 test?

2) Choose a location that minimizes exposure for all participants.

- Whenever possible, in-person contact should occur where social distancing can be easily practiced. Social distancing among children and their parents and siblings is not expected.
- Restaurants are not ideal locations to allow for social distancing and they present a privacy concern.
- When having contact in a home, consider limiting areas of the home that are used during the contact. This will make it easier to clean frequently touched surfaces before and after

the contact.

- Meet in the largest room of the home to allow for better social distancing.
- When inside, open the windows to increase ventilation, if possible.
- Visiting in local county/agency offices should be a last resort, used only when there is no other feasible location for the visit to take place.

3) Minimize the number of people present for contacts, aside from parents and children.

4) Ensure expectations regarding social distancing, masking, and proper hygiene before, during, and after the visit are appropriately communicated.

- a. Plan activities that use toys and other objects that can be easily cleaned before and after the visit. Local offices and agencies should ensure all community toys/table activities are cleared from visit rooms. Parents, caregivers, and foster parents should be invited to bring their own freshly sanitized toys/activities for use during the visit and take with them following the visit with instruction to sanitize upon return home. Toys that cannot be easily sanitized should not be allowed.
- b. Participants should wash or sanitize hands prior to and immediately after the visit.
- c. Ensure hand sanitizer, tissues, and a trash can are easily accessible. Visit participants should cough or sneeze into a tissue, throw the tissue away, and wash or sanitize their hands.
- d. Parents and children can show affection during visits. Parents should consider ways to show affection that may lower the risk of transmitting the virus, including:
 - i. Hugging facing different directions.
 - ii. Letting children hug parents around the legs or waist.
 - iii. Kissing children on the tops of their heads, rather than on the face or mouth.
- e. Encourage participants to change and wash their clothing and shower after the visit if possible.
- f. When children must be transported, the person bringing the child should call or text when they arrive rather than bringing the child into the visit location, especially if the person does not need to participate in the visit.

Resources for Workers and Families

- Use of Masks to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – CDC)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): Masks (World Health Organization – WHO)
<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-masks>
- How is COVID-19 Spread and other FAQs (CDC)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Spread>

Attachments

- COVID-19 Prevention – How to Protect Yourself and Others
- Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19 – Why Wear a Mask