

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Child and Family Services
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March 25, 2020

Dear Resource Families,

Thank you again for your hard work and dedication to taking care of Maine's most vulnerable children during this time of uncertainty. OCFS understands that balancing work, childcare and educational responsibilities for children in care can be challenging and we extend our sincerest appreciation for your efforts.

Last week, we informed you that OCFS would be suspending visitation between children and their parents for two weeks, at which time the protocol would be reviewed to determine next steps based on current circumstances and CDC recommendations. A decision has been made that this protocol will remain in place through the end of April. If circumstances change and OCFS can safely resume in person visits sooner, we will notify you of this change. It is critical that children and their families are able to maintain connections, especially for children who may have questions about what is going on and wondering if their family members are safe and healthy. If you need support to help maintain these contacts, please reach out to your caseworker. You may also receive call from our family visitation partners (HCI, AMHC and Penquis) who are available to help coordinate and supervise contact. For resource parents who are facilitating contact between a youth and their parents, I am attaching a simple form that needs to be filled out and sent to the caseworker for our records.

For children's therapy appointments, OCFS is encouraging the use of telehealth. Many providers are moving to this model, which is supported by OCFS. Based on guidance from the Maine CDC, any time you are considering taking a child to the Emergency Department or their doctor's office, you should call ahead for instructions, unless it is a true medical emergency in which case you should contact 911.

Telehealth is also being utilized for crisis evaluations and is being used in ED's as well as at other locations, such as your home. OCFS continues to have staff available 24 hours a day/7 days per week to assist you, don't hesitate to call Intake (1-800-452-1999) to request to speak with a caseworker if you believe your child is in crisis and you would like support to maintain them in your home while awaiting an evaluation.

OCFS has also created a listserv (an email mailing list) to ensure you receive information as quickly as possible. Please contact your licensing worker to provide this information if you have not done so already.

Lastly, we would encourage you to sign up for direct deposit. We are not anticipating any changes to issuing paper checks but want to ensure you receive your payments and subsidies in the most timely way and in a manner that will help keep you and your family safe and healthy.

We encourage you to visit the Maine OCFS website for the most up to date information, as well as the US and Maine CDC websites.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bobbi L. Johnson, LMSW".

Bobbi L. Johnson, LMSW
Associate Director of Child Welfare Services
Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Child and Family Services

Resource Parent Visitation Documentation

Date of Contact:

Name of Caseworker:

List children participating in contact:

Name of Visitor(s):

Name of Person Providing Supervision:

Type of Contact:

Phone Call

Skype

Facetime

Other _____

Length of Contact:

List Strengths/What Went Well:

List any Concerns or Challenges: