

Janet T. Mills
Governor

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Commissioner



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April 27, 2020

Dear Families,

Last month we informed you that the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) would be suspending in-person visitation until the end of April 2020. Due to the continued public health crisis, OCFS is continuing the suspension of in-person visitation until the end of May 2020. If circumstances change and OCFS can safely resume in-person visits sooner, we will notify you of this change.

Video and phone contact will continue for the next month. If you need support to maintain these contacts, please reach out to your caseworker. Family Visitation Partners (Home Counselors, Incorporated (HCI), Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC), and Penquis) are available to help coordinate and support video and phone contacts.

It is critical that the contact children are having with their families is the best quality possible in these circumstances. Some visit support workers have reported that having toddlers seated in a high chair with a snack at the beginning of a video visit is helpful. Resource parents can help prompt parents to ask about a certain toy or activity that the child has in the room to get them to engage in conversations. If both families have the same books, the parent can read to the child while the child follows along with their book at home. Older children have played board games with parents by video.

OCFS recognizes the challenges with video and phone visits and is making every effort to keep children and families safe during this time. Please continue to visit the Maine OCFS website for the most up to date information, as well as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention 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