



March 23, 2020

Dear In-Home, Parent Aide, SVO, and BRF Contracted Providers,

Below are the questions and answers from the In-Home, Parent Aide, SVO, and BRF conference call on 3/20. All questions and answers will also be posted on the DCS website: <https://dcs.az.gov/covid19>.

1. Clarification on the Department's direction for Virtual Visitation – Parenting Time (Parent-Child Visits):
 - a. Through **April 5th**, it is preferred that all parenting time (parent-child visits) be conducted virtually. However, if all parties (child, parent, provider, and caregiver) agree, parenting time may still be conducted in-person. The Department has given providers the option to now conduct visits virtually.
 - i. If any party is not comfortable with proceeding with an in-person visit, please conduct virtually. At this time, DCS Specialists may not require visits to be held in-person.
 - ii. This instruction is time-limited. In the upcoming weeks, the Department will evaluate if virtual visits need to be extended past April 5th.
 - iii. For more direction please reference the DCS "*Letter to Parent Aide and Supervised Visitation Providers – Virtual Visit*" posted on <https://dcs.az.gov/covid19>.
 - b. For Family Preservation In-Home Contacts
 - i. In-home service providers will make the required monthly contacts per SOW with **safe** children living in-home and their parents or guardians virtually using video conferencing. If video conferencing is not available for one or both parties, the provider will make the required contacts by telephone.
 - ii. For children in-home assessed **unsafe** (safety plan necessary to manage dangers), make the required monthly contacts per SOW with children and their parents or guardians **in-person**.
 - iii. For more direction please reference the DCS "*Child Contact Administrative Directive*" posted on <https://dcs.az.gov/covid19>.
2. How to handle Parenting Skill Visits:
 - a. Please see the attached letter regarding direction around *Parent Aide Skill Building Sessions*.
3. Clarification on if the Parent or Caregiver/Child does not have access to teleconferencing equipment:
 - a. The provider may transport either the child or the parent, based on who has access to the technology. It is the Department's expectation that the provider assist all parties to gain access to the technology/equipment to conduct parenting time (visits) virtually.
 - b. If efforts have been made but virtual visits are not able to be conducted via video conference, the parenting time may be held telephonically.
4. Clarification on the requirement to document consent for Virtual Visitation:
 - a. DCS is leaving it up to the provider agency to determine how to document the consent from a client to conduct visits virtually. This documentation may be used as proof that a visit was conducted.

5. How to bill if a visit does not last a full hour? Do we need to make up Partial Visits?
 - a. Continue to bill per hour per the contract SOW and round to the nearest hour. If a parenting time session (visit) lasts only 30 minutes, you may bill for the full hour.
 - b. DCS is not requiring providers to make up partial visits. Provider should plan activities to be conducted during visits that will engage both child and parent for the allotted time. However, please use your best discretion in determining when to end the visit based on the quality of the engagement.
 - c. The scope of supervised visits is typically to provide four hours of contact between parent and child each week. Due to the potential for a shorter virtual visit, providers should be flexible in arranging virtual visits to maintain this standard of four hours. This could mean more visits per week if the schedules allow. However, please make sure you are communicating regularly with the DCS Specialist.

6. Will DCS pay for equipment for virtual visitation?
 - a. Providers may not bill DCS for operational costs associated with conducting virtual visits. Transition to virtual visits may reduce operational costs, specifically travel. These costs may be shifted to assist with the cost of conducting virtual visits.
 - b. DCS will cover any costs associated to canceling in-person visits on Thursday 3/19 and Friday 3/20 due to the transition to virtual visits.
 - i. For example, if transportation was already booked but had to be cancelled, DCS will cover the cost for cancelling.

DCS is committed to supporting our provider community. Please understand we are learning more on COVID-19 each day just as the rest of the community. We will be communicating regularly as we have information and will continue having Friday conference calls to provide updates and take questions.

If your organization has any other questions or if there is any other way DCS can assist during this time please reach out to:

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Thank you,



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