

March 30, 2020

Re: Virtual Visitation Directive

On March 19, 2020 an administrative directive was issued permitting the use of virtual visitation during the COVID-19 public health emergency in lieu of face to face parenting. The directive was time limited with an expiration date of April 5th, 2020. This decision was weighed very carefully and is continually being reevaluated.

On 3/30/2020, the Governor's Office and Dr. Cara Christ briefed the public¹ that the peak of Arizona's spread will be mid to late April and elected to close schools through remainder of the school year. In light of this information I am extending this directive to remain in place through April 30th, 2020.

As the April 30th date approaches, the Department will closely monitor the public health situation and communicate with all parties if any change is warranted in this directive. Further changes to this directive will be informed by conditions around public health recommendations relating to the size of social gatherings.

To clarify, the directive is that virtual visitation is the desirable solution during this public health crisis. This does not mean face to face visits are not permitted. Face to face visits are appropriate in a case by case situation. For the safety all of parties, the use of face to face visits should be limited and must be staffed between Program Managers and the Program Administrator for final decision making. If any party requires clarification as to whether a face to face visit is appropriate, please elevate to the Program Manager over the DCS specialist and DCS supervisor.

This is not an ideal situation but for the safety of children, parents, caregivers and the overall public health this is in our collective best interest. I implore parents, caregivers, DCS Staff and providers to exercise patience, compassion and a supportive heart during these challenging times. Ensuring these visits are occurring is essential for children's well-being.

Thank you for all you do to support the needs of children and families.

Mike Faust
Director

¹ <https://azgovernor.gov/governor/news/2020/03/video-governor-ducey-adhs-director-dr-christ-maj-gen-mcguire-share-latest>

