

**CIRCULAR**

**Date:** March 27, 2020

**CIRCULAR NUMBER:** COVID#: 2020-17

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**To:** CCP, CFS Authorities, CYSD staff

**Subject: Information Pertaining to COVID-19**

**Program(s): All**

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**Type:**  Policy  For Internal Reference Only  
 Procedure  Information Only

**Effective Date** Immediately

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**Topic: Family Visitation**

Agencies need to encourage and create safe opportunities to support routine contact between children and family members who are physically separated.

Reunification support and services need to continue for children in care to help provide stability during the uncertainty caused by COVID-19. Agencies need to adapt and continue reunification services, with plans in place to address travel restrictions and self-isolation measures where possible.

Agencies are responsible for deciding whether family visits proceed and what changes are needed as a result of COVID-19 (e.g. change in location, reducing number of drivers or other supports involved in facilitating the visit, and alternative means of in person contact such as phone, Skype, FaceTime etc.).

Agencies need to provide direction to caregivers on the protective measures that must be taken for visits. They must also follow public health direction on screening people facilitating and attending visits.

Caregivers should also know they can screen people attending their home on agency business using specific screening questions provided.

Agencies should ensure daily deep cleaning of visitation rooms.

Where ongoing visits have been discontinued or reduced, agencies should arrange video options between children in placement and parents.

Caregivers need clear information on what to do if a child exhibits symptoms or may have been exposed to COVID-19:

- Contact Health Links and the child's physician
- Immediately notify the child's worker

Agencies should consider how to handle higher than usual requests for placement changes.

Measures taken to control the spread of COVID-19 can change a child's home environment, disrupt routines and social supports, and can place new stresses on caregivers. Agencies should plan how to support foster parents during this time.

All screening for suspected cases of the virus are to be referred to Health Links at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-325-9257. The most up to date information on COVID-19 can be found at [www.manitoba.ca/covid19](http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19).

If you have any other questions, please contact your organization or agency.

Sarah Thiele | Assistant Deputy Minister  
Child and Family Services