



Memorandum

To: Child Welfare Staff
From: Mary Havick, Deputy Division Director of Child Welfare
Date: August 11, 2021
Re: Requests for Temporary Virtual Case Manager Contacts

This memo provides updated guidance for in-person visits due to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases. As previously shared, effective September 1, 2021, we are returning to 100% in-person contacts for all program areas. In most cases, case managers are required to conduct one face-to-face visit per month. For situations where multiple visits are required with the same individual(s) and there are no safety concerns, one contact should be in-person and the other may be virtual until further notice.

As we return to 100% in-person contacts, there may be COVID-19 outbreaks impacting multiple DFCS county office staff and/or specific units within a county office. In those situations, the temporary use of virtual contacts may be requested to replace in-person contacts. The request to use virtual contacts exclusively should be made by the county director to the regional director and must include the following components:

- COVID-19 related – *includes local public health concerns and/or staff infections*
- Time limited – *can be approved for 30 days or less*
- Specific – *includes specific staff and/or units impacted*

In addition, when a family, caregiver, and/or group home provider requests a virtual visit in lieu of an in-person visit due to COVID-19 infections, it should be honored. The case manager should record the reason for the virtual visit in the SHINES documentation.

Whenever there is a question about the immediate safety of a child, a virtual visit is not appropriate. If there is a COVID-19 outbreak and an immediate safety concern, a staffing should occur including the county director to determine the next steps.

PPE is available and its use is strongly encouraged for all in-person work. When the supply is low, the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator may request more at Operation.DFCS@dhs.ga.gov.

Thank you for your continued flexibility throughout this entire process.