

PARENT PARTNER GUIDANCE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

March 5, 2021

The Parent Partner Program is a voluntary program to support and mentor families involved in the child welfare system. Effective March 5, 2021, the Parent Partner Program will meet in person with parents receiving support in the Parent Partner Program according to the guidance provided below. Additional in-person contacts may be prioritized based on parent need, with prior supervisor approval from the Parent Partner Coordinator, or Service Area Coordinator. Parent Partners may continue to provide virtual support to parents in between in person contacts. Guidelines and protocols for in-person contacts are detailed below:

Guidance as of March 5, 2021, the Parent Partner Program will continue to screen all in person visits by:

1. Calling before an in-person visits occurs to screen for previous or current illness within the family.
2. Identifying if the Parent Partner or member of the family has been or is currently feeling ill.
3. In person visits in are suggested to be held in an outdoor location weather permitting, all participants during the visit wearing masks, and practicing use of social distancing.
4. Following all recommended CDC guidelines.

In person contact with participants in the Parent Partner Program will occur:

- ▶ In person (2 times per month) with new cases or those that have been opened less than 60 days
- ▶ In person (2 times per month) with cases that are considered high risk/high need participants
- ▶ In person (1 time per month) with all other cases.
- ▶ Parent Partners to attend court hearings, CSC's and FTDM's when held in person.
- ▶ Parent Partner team meetings, clinical (monthly) and case consultations in person, following pre-screen precautions as indicated above.
- ▶ Virtual visits and contacts will continue to occur in between in person visits and will increase when there is a reduction to in person visits in order to provide continuity of support to the parent.

The Parent Partner program has developed a statewide protocol to stay safe during the current pandemic in response to the increased number of positive COVID cases in Iowa. The below protocol outlines steps the Parent Partner contractor will take regarding identified counties in the state where the COVID positivity case rate is high.

Steps for amendment to Parent Partner program COVID protocol:

1. State Director, Operational Coordinator and QA Specialist will check the Harvard Covid Hotspot map at 8:00am every Monday morning.
<https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>
2. If a county of the Coordinator’s covered area is identified as Tipping Point (red) they will be asked to conduct daily tasks in virtual status for that identified week in that county.
3. An email will be sent to the Contract Manager regarding area status update weekly and documentation will be placed on the Parent Partner Approval Log for contract manager initial.
4. State Director will notify those Local Coordinators and Service Area Coordinators of virtual status for the identified week.
5. Local Coordinators will provide documentation as needed in files to demonstrate virtual status.
6. Will continue to follow all CDC guidelines for those counties that remain as in-person contact.
7. State Director and Contract Manager will communicate no less than one time per month to determine effectiveness of updated guidance.
8. All CDC guidelines will be followed including, pre-screening calls, social distancing and wearing of masks.

CONTAINMENT DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

When preparing or scheduling appointments for face-to-face visits, be sure to ask all adult subjects and household members the following questions:

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

- ▶ Fever or chills
- ▶ Cough
- ▶ Diarrhea
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Muscle or body aches
- ▶ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ New loss of taste or smell
- ▶ Sore throat
- ▶ Congestion or runny nose
- ▶ Nausea or vomiting

1. Have you had contact with anyone who has known or possible exposure to the COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
2. Are you on home quarantine or isolation due to possible contact with someone with possible or confirmed COVID-19 or due to travel?
3. Have you or anyone in the household recently discharged from a hospitalization due to Confirmed COVID-19 or due to travel?

Anyone who answers “yes” to the screening questions should consult with their health care provider and public health as appropriate to follow relevant guidance which includes but is not limited to:

- ▶ Do not conduct the home or in-person visit.
- ▶ Direct the household member to visit www.testiowa.com and enter their information, or to contact their local public health department or health care practitioner for guidance.
- ▶ Tell the family to stay home, except to get medical care and to separate himself/herself from

other people and animals.

- ▶ Direct the family to avoid sharing personal household items and to clean high touch surfaces every day.
- ▶ As appropriate, suggest household members stay in another room or be separated from an ill or potentially infected family member as much as possible.
- ▶ Suggest the family limit non-essential visitors in the home.
- ▶ Document pre-visit screening data in appropriate systems.

If the family answers “no” during pre-screening for all of the above questions, Parent Partners may proceed with the in person visit. The following guidelines are recommended for in person visits:

MITIGATION PRACTICES FOR PRACTICES REQUIRING FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT WITH FAMILIES

1. Implement common-sense practices for preventing disease spread, such as: covering a cough, staying home when sick, and washing hands.
2. Call in advance of conducting home visits or other face-to-face meetings. (see screening questions that should be discussed in advance).
3. During face-to-face meetings, do not sit within 6 feet of the family.
4. Wear face masks during in-person contacts.
5. Conduct meetings outdoors whenever possible.
6. Avoid handling paperwork during the meeting.
7. Avoid touching your face or hair during the meeting.
8. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with warm, soapy water or hand sanitizer before and after the meeting.

Parent Partners, coordinators and service area coordinators should also answer the above screening questions for themselves prior to making a warranted home or in-person visit. If any of these answers are “yes,” they should contact their primary care provider, follow the primary care provider’s instructions, and not conduct in-person visits until cleared by their primary care provider.

THE PARENT PARTNER CONTRACTOR WILL ALSO

- ▶ Ensure parents who are not receiving face-to-face contacts, or who have a reduction in face-to-face contacts, receive increased support via phone or video chat.
- ▶ Contacts to parents by phone or video chat will be intentional in exploring and offering supports and resources needed. This should include coping with social isolation, potential relapse or sobriety concerns. Identify concrete needs such as household supplies or grocery items, access to virtual and available community resources for mental and physical health, etc.
- ▶ Parent Partners provide phone support within their current scope of support and mentorship of parents in the program and are well-equipped to provide supports and resources in this manner.
- ▶ Report and document the number of face-to-face contacts that do not occur monthly, and steps taken to provide a meaningful service even when in-person contacts have not occurred.

- ▶ Ensure parents report to their Parent Partner when they or household members have potential exposure or have tested positive for COVID-19. The parent partner will contact the parent's DHS social worker, and their Parent Partner coordinator or service area coordinator, who will report this information the Parent Partner state coordinator. This information will be tracked to ensure communication has occurred. This will be reported to the Child Welfare Bureau and Field Operations Bureau.

If avoiding in-person visits negatively impacts contractually required work responsibilities, notify the DHS program manager for further direction.

GENERAL RESOURCES

The situation related to COVID-19 is changing rapidly. Visit the websites below for up-to-date information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Iowa Department of Public Health:

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus>

COVID-19 DHS Resources:

<https://dhs.iowa.gov/COVID19>

