

FOSTER CARE LICENSING GUIDELINES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

May 27, 2020

The following guidance is based on the most current Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) guidance. The health and safety of children, family, case workers, and foster parents are of the utmost importance. This guidance is not intended to address every potential scenario that may arise as this event evolves.

In response to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic and federal and state guidance, which is relaxing social distancing guidelines, DHS is taking action to safely resume in-person contacts with foster care applicants and foster parents.

MITIGATION PRACTICES MUST BEGIN FOR ALL CASEWORKERS INVOLVED IN FOSTER CARE LICENSING PRACTICES REQUIRING FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT WITH APPLICANTS/FOSTER PARENTS

- ▶ Implement common-sense practices for preventing disease spread by asking questions prior to any visit about the presence of cough and fever, or known coronavirus exposure.
- ▶ Carry disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer; use them liberally to ensure a safe meeting environment.
- ▶ A face cover/mask is recommended.
- ▶ Avoid touching your face or hair during the meeting.
- ▶ Social distance - do not sit within 6 feet of others.
- ▶ Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with warm, soapy water or use hand sanitizer before and after the meeting

CONTAINMENT DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR ASSESSMENTS

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



Have you had contact with anyone who has known or possible exposure to the COVID-19 in the last 14 days?



Are you on home quarantine or isolation due to possible contact with someone with possible or confirmed COVID-19 or due to travel?



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:

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Advise the household member to stay home, except to get medical care and to separate himself/herself from other people and animals.
 - Direct the household member to avoid sharing personal household items and to clean high touch surfaces every day.
 - As appropriate, suggest other household members stay in another room or be separated from that household member as much as possible.
 - Suggest that the household member limits non-essential visitors in the home.
- ▶ Document pre-visit screening information in appropriate systems.
- ▶ If an applicant or foster family has tested positive for COVID-19 or is displaying symptoms, the use of video conferencing will be allowed and counted as a visit. The caseworker will follow up with a face-to-face visit when the family has no health concerns.

LICENSING AND MONTHLY IN-PERSON CONTACTS WILL RESUME JUNE 1, 2020 – THIS WILL INCLUDE

- ▶ Monthly contact with licensed foster parents
- ▶ Required visits with applicants completing home study process
- ▶ 5-day post placement visit
- ▶ Unannounced licensing visit

FOSTER PARENT TRAINING

TIPS-MAPP pre-service trainings currently in session will complete the class through video-conferencing. TIPS-MAPP pre-service training as well as all other approved foster parent training will begin to transition from video conferencing to in-person training. The transition will begin June 1, 2020 and be completed by July 1, 2020. Social distancing through increased spacing is highly encouraged as well as limited mixing during class. If a venue cannot be located by July 1, 2020, contractors will contact the Foster Care Program Manager for an exception. Facilitators will follow CDC disinfecting guidelines for all training locations.

INITIAL AND RENEWAL LICENSING PROCESS

Waivers were previously granted due to the COVID-19 crisis so that processing of home studies would not be delayed. These waivers included the following:

- ▶ CPR/First Aid (completed by 12/1/20)
- ▶ Driver’s License renewal
- ▶ Physicals
- ▶ Well testing
- ▶ FBI Fingerprinting

Contractors will begin contacting applicants/foster parents as these services resume in our community in order to complete the licensing process.

QUESTIONS

For questions about this guidance, contact, Nancy Swanson, Foster Care Program Manager at nswanso@dhs.state.ia.us