



Tips for Talking with Families: Successful Family Interaction During the Public Health Crisis

Child welfare professionals should always start by assessing the individual needs, concerns, and boundaries that may impact the ability for children in their home to have successful face-to-face visits. The following recommendations are designed to facilitate that work.

- Discuss the importance of face-to-face family interaction with the out-of-home care provider.
 - Family interaction is critical for bonding and attachments and promotes efforts towards reunification.
 - Physical contact is the primary method by which children, particularly young children, maintain relationships with caregivers.
- Reinforce that children in foster care have multiple places they call home which is not dissimilar from shared custody arrangements.
- Emphasize that children and families have a right to contact, and that out-of-home care providers are vital in supporting and facilitating that contact.
- Explain the steps being taken to minimize risk and work together to find creative approaches to minimize everyone's risk.
 - Help identify what supports, protections, and reassurances out-of-home care providers need or are hoping will be provided.
 - Identify any people who are at a [higher risk for severe illness due to exposure to COVID-19](#).
 - If providers are unable or unwilling to support visitation, please escalate the scenario to your supervisor's attention.
- Make a plan to prepare children on what to expect upon resuming face-to-face visits with their parents.
 - This should include information about people wearing face coverings and other potential precautionary measures.
 - Help identify what supports, protections, and reassurances children need or are hoping will be provided.
 - Please use the [CDC's information on helping children understand the public health emergency](#).