

INTERIM INSTRUCTION NOTICE #20-025**MARCH 25, 2020****SUBJECT:** Inter-County and Interstate Travel**DISTRIBUTION:** CFS**FILE:** AOHB – In Front of Part 2**REFERENCE:** N/A**OBSOLETE:** When the emergency protocol is lifted**Overview**

This Interim Instruction Notice (IIN) provides instructions for Children and Family Services (CFS) staff regarding inter-county and interstate travel during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak.

Determining face to face contacts

Factors to consider when determining if a face-to-face visit is necessary during this public health state of emergency include the following:

- Is the child being visited by other professionals, tribal representatives and/or mandated reporters during this time period and the social worker (SW) can receive an updated report from those professionals and/or reporters regarding the child?
- Has the child been in the same placement for the last four months and the SW has determined that the placement is stable, without any concerns noted?
- Has the child been seen in person by a Foster Family Agency (FFA) social worker within the last 14 days with no concerns reported?
- Is the child in an Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP) or group home (in-state or out-of-state) and receiving ongoing treatment with a mental health professional, including telehealth, as well as on-site case management by the agency staff?
- Has the child been visited by their case manager in each of the prior three months with no concerns noted regarding the placement?
- The chronological and developmental age of the child, as young children and children with developmental delays or disabilities may not be able to verbalize or otherwise communicate needs and safety issues remotely. SW is to use the Structured Decision Making (SDM) child vulnerabilities to help assess the child.

When it is determined that a face-to-face visit is not necessary to ensure the child's safety and well-being for that specific monthly visit, alternative methods of contact to monitor the child's safety and well-being can be used.

Reference: All County Letter 20-25

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Prescreening questions

If a face-to-face visit is determined to be needed to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the child or nonminor dependent (NMD), the SW should conduct a pre-screening telephone call with the caregiver or NMD. If, however, contacting the person by telephone in advance of a face-to-face visit is not appropriate or feasible, the same prescreening questions should be used prior to beginning the visit.

Pre-screening telephonic calls:

“To protect public health, we are asking you to answer yes or no to a few questions, so that we can provide appropriate services to you and your family.”

- Do you know if anyone in the household currently have any of the following symptoms?
 - Fever/chills/body aches
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
- Do you know if anyone in the household has traveled to the countries listed below in the last 14 days?
 - China,
 - Iran,
 - South Korea,
 - Europe,
 - United Kingdom or Ireland
- Do you know if anyone has had contact with a patient with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 in the last 14 days?

If someone answers “yes” to any of the questions, they should be encouraged to contact their doctor, the Department of Public Health or follow the directions in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website. Let them know about their symptoms and/or exposure and the SW should make alternate plans to accomplish the purpose of the contact and ensure the child’s health, safety and wellbeing.

Additionally, SWs should notify their supervision/management if clients, partners, family members, etc. self-disclose they have been exposed, are in quarantine or are being tested. Management to provide support to the SW to navigate the situation and document in Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS).

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Children placed out-of-county For children placed out-of-county (excluding Los Angeles, Orange and Riverside), CFS leadership has made a formal request to the host county for assistance with emergency face-to-face visits. Conversely, San Bernardino County will complete emergency face-to-face visits for children from other counties placed here (excluding Los Angeles, Orange and Riverside).

If face-to-face contact is not possible or advisable then an alternative method such as video conferencing (i.e., FaceTime, Skype, WebEx or similar technology) is to be used to complete the visit. Every effort should be made to ensure that the child is alone and is able to talk freely.

Note: If video conferencing is not available, phone calls are an acceptable alternative.

Children placed out-of-state The SW should determine whether the monthly visit should occur in person. This is a case-specific decision that must be made based on the training and experience of the SW, considering all available information.

When it is determined that a face-to-face visit is not necessary to ensure the child's safety and well-being for that specific monthly visit, alternative methods of contact to monitor the child's safety and well-being can be used. Video conferencing (Skype, Facetime, WebEx, etc.) is recommended as the first option for communication with the child and caregiver.

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC Liaisons) are advised to reach out to the Out-of-State Placement Unit at California Department of Social Services (CDSS) if there are difficulties related to travel restrictions or if the facility in the receiving state creates barriers to visitation with a child or youth. CDSS will work with the states in which youth are placed (for both group homes and NMD/foster care placements) to ask for their assistance with face-to-face visits for all placements as necessary.

At this time, out-of-state travel will only be approved for emergency purposes. Requests for out-of-state travel will require approval by a Deputy Director or above

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Out-of-state NMDs

For NMD placed out-of-state an alternative method such as video conferencing (i.e., FaceTime, Skype, or similar technology) are to be used in lieu of face-to-face contact.

If the NMD does not have a telephone or computer, it is imperative for SWs to make arrangements to ensure the NMD's needs are met and there is a way to contact the NMD. SWs shall ensure that NMDs have proper resources and a plan developed for following local public health guidance, including, but not limited to: housing, food, water, hygiene, and other needed items.
