



Topic: Guidance for Residential Providers on Visits with Family and Friends

Effective Date: July 26, 2020

Visits with family and friends are important to the well-being of individuals living in provider-managed settings. As COVID-19 cases decrease across New Jersey, indoor and outdoor visits must now be offered by residential providers when certain criteria are met. In either visit type, social distancing and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) are required.

Visits of any kind shall only be permitted so long as the Department of Human Services, State and/or local health officials agree that it is safe to do so. Adjustments to this policy will occur as more information is learned about the virus.

It is important to recognize that, even with prudent steps being taken to reduce risk of COVID-19 infection, neither the provider nor Division can guarantee that transmission will not occur. For this reason, the individual, family, guardian and provider need to discuss the overall risk a visit poses to the individual's physical and mental health and how they will react to a visit where social distancing and the use of PPE is required. This shall include information contained in CDC guidance found at:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/activities.html

Visits Within the Residence

Visits within the residence are required and shall only occur when there have been no residents or staff of the home who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 28 consecutive days or are currently displaying symptoms. *Should a new positive case be identified, visitation within the residence shall be suspended until 28 days have passed.* There must also be adequate physical space in the residence to accommodate other residents and allow the required social distancing to occur during the visit. If this criteria are not met, an alternate indoor location may be identified by the provider or an outdoor visit shall be provided.

Outdoor Visits

Visits outside of the residence are required, weather permitting, and shall only occur when it has been at least 14 days since a resident or staff of the home tested positive for COVID-19 and no residents or staff of the home are currently displaying symptoms. Outdoor visits may occur where visits within the residence or other indoor location are not possible or when otherwise practical.

Visits should occur in an outdoor area agreed upon by the provider with sufficient space and seating to allow individuals who have not been residing together to be at least six feet apart. This could be on the property of the home or in a public setting (such as a park) that is not over-crowded.

Outside temperature, weather conditions, availability of restrooms and other facilities should be considered in planning. The residential provider shall provide transportation for the resident. When planning activities, consider those that are appropriate to the needs of the individual and that lend themselves to social distancing.

Visit Requirements (Regardless of Location)

In order for visits to occur, there are three levels of attestation/consent which are required:

- The Residential Provider must complete, sign (including the signature of a witness), and email the [Provider Attestation for Visitation](#)* to dhs.ool@dhs.nj.gov before visits begin on July 26, 2020.
- The individual or their guardian, if they have a guardian are required to sign the [Guardian Consent for Visitation During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)*.
- Each visitor must sign the [Visitor Agreement](#)* before meeting with the resident.

**Indicates forms that are to be retained on site by the provider and do not need to be forwarded to the Division.*

All visits must be scheduled in advance with the residential provider. No more than two visitors shall be permitted at any one time. The provider may place limits on the duration, time of day and days of the week visits may take place. Each person participating in a visit must adhere to the protocols described in [Screening of Visitors and Staff in Residential Settings](#). Additional requirements are:

- Each participant will maintain a distance of at least six feet apart from each person they do not reside with. It is recognized that a resident may not understand social distancing. If a resident does initiate physical contact with someone they do not reside with during the interaction it should be brief.
- Each participant must wear a face covering. Visitors should inquire with the provider if they need to bring their own face covering or if it will be provided. The resident should be encouraged to wear a face covering. It is understood that they may not tolerate/be medically advisable for them to do so.
- After a visit in a space controlled by the provider concludes, the provider shall clean and disinfect all areas and surfaces that visitors were in contact with, following CDC guidelines¹.
- To the best of their knowledge, no resident, current staff of the home or person(s) planning to visit have been in close contact (within six feet for 10 minutes) within the last 14 days with someone who recently tested positive for COVID-19 (i.e. in the past two weeks).
- All participants are required to monitor themselves for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for at least 14 days after the visit. If symptoms occur, advise them to self-isolate at home, contact their healthcare provider, and immediately notify the provider of the date they visited. The provider should immediately screen the resident who had contact, and take all necessary actions based on any findings.

Those persons participating in the visit may want to bring item(s) or food for the resident. Any items and packaging for the resident should be disinfected before being provided to the resident. It is recommended that food items be purchased in a sealed package from a grocery store with proper disinfection of the packaging before use. Those disinfecting the item/package must wash their hands after completing.

Other Types of Visits

If a family or friend requests a visit that is not within the residence or in an outdoor setting with the provider present, such as an overnight visit to a family member's home or other daytime outing, the residential provider may establish parameters for the individual's re-admission. This may include not allowing immediate re-admission. The residential provider should be contacted to determine what these parameters may be.

¹ www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html