

Caregiver Guidance for Family Visits and the Use of PPEs

Family Visits for Children in Care during COVID-19

Case teams and caregivers have played a significant role in keeping children safe and helping manage the spread of COVID-19. As the Province moves into a phased relaunch, Children's Services will gradually need to resume normal legislative activities in a way that is both safe and that ensures the best interests of children in care remains a priority. Family Time is recognized as a key strategy for children to foster healthy connections, bonds and attachments with their parents, guardians, siblings and other significant connections. Continued collaboration between the case team and caregivers will be instrumental in the process of reinstating in-person family visits as we continue to navigate this 'new and normal' way of meeting children's needs.

Family Time

Family time is essential to the children and youth in our care. You will be contacted to plan for an in-person visit for children and their families. Your input is important and the case team will need to know if you have concerns or circumstances that require special supports. Planning for an in-person visit between a child in care and their parent(s) is a collaboration between the case team(s), the child's parent(s), and caregivers. The focus will be on connecting children with families while being as creative as possible. In-person visits may be supervised or unsupervised in accordance with the case plan. Planning may include visits outside as well as include support networks involvement. All while following Alberta Health Services (AHS) guidelines.

Children's Services staff as well as agency partners will follow safety practices and Alberta Health Services Guidelines for the safety of families and workers. This will include completing a self-assessment before attending your home, asking screening questions and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for workers and families (if required).

We are also suggesting you use the questions on the AHS Visitor Screening Questionnaire (with additional COVID-19 symptoms added) below as a straightforward approach to have an open conversation about how to reduce risk from others entering or re-entering your home. The questionnaire only relates to **new** symptoms or a **worsening** of symptoms related to allergies, chronic or pre-existing conditions.

Risk Assessment: Screening Questions

1.	Does anyone wanting to enter your home have any of the following COVID-19 symptoms? Common symptoms: cough, fever (over 38°C), shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat. Other symptoms can include: stuffy nose, painful swallowing, headache, chills, muscle or joint aches, feeling unwell in general, new fatigue or severe exhaustion, gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite), loss of sense of smell or taste, conjunctivitis (pink eye).	Yes	No
2.	Has anyone wanting to enter your home, returned to Canada from outside the country (including USA) in the past 14 days?	Yes	No
In the past 14 days, while not wearing appropriate personal protective equipment:			
3.	Has anyone wanting to enter your home, have close contact* with someone who has a probable** or confirmed case of COVID19?	Yes	No

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4.	Has anyone wanting to enter your home, have close contact* with a person who had acute respiratory illness that started within 14 days of their close contact* to someone with a probable** or confirmed case of COVID-19?	Yes	No
5.	Has anyone wanting to enter your home, have close contact* with a person who had acute respiratory illness who returned from travel outside of Canada in the 14 days before they became sick?	Yes	No

*A Close Contact is defined as a person who:

- provided care for the patient, including healthcare workers, family members or other caregivers, or who had other similar close physical contact without consistent and appropriate use of personal protective equipment OR
- who lived with/otherwise had close prolonged contact (within 2 metres) with the person while they were infectious OR
- had direct contact with infectious bodily fluids of the person (e.g. was coughed or sneezed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

If they answer “YES” to any of the above, they should not enter your home. There will need to be further discussion with your support and caseworker(s) and extra precautions taken.

Here is a Reminder of What you can do to Prevent the Spread:

Practicing good hand hygiene (hand washing and sanitizer) and Physical distancing (2 m. /6 ft. apart) are the two best ways to [prevent the spread of COVID-19](https://www.alberta.ca/prevent-the-spread.aspx)

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Other ways to prevent the spread:

- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow or shoulder
- Avoid touching your face
- Clean household items and sanitize hard surfaces (door handles, phones, bedside tables, countertops, electronics, toilets, handrails, TV remotes)
- Follow the Universal Precautions contained in the Kinship Care and Foster Care Handbooks

Medical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Medical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can mean gloves, masks or face coverings, eye protection and sometimes gowns.

The need for PPEs will depend on your unique situation. A graphic was developed to help caregivers and for those supporting caregivers with deciding which PPE is best.

Refer to “*CI PPE Infographic Kinship and Foster Caregivers: Do I Need Personal Protective Equipment?*”

Agencies and regions do have a process to acquire PPE for caregivers. Your support worker will help you plan what items you may need and the quantity of each item. They will also assist you to access AHS guidelines on how the PPE should be worn – both how to put it on and take it off correctly and to dispose of it so that you do not put yourself or others at risk.

Contact **Health Link 811** if you are unsure if, or which, PPEs are required.

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The [**Caregivers Resource and Guidance: Caregivers, this is for you!**](#) (coming soon!) booklet as well as **ALIGN** (<https://alignab.ca/>) and **AFKA** (<https://www.afkaonline.ca/>) websites are also helpful if you want to learn more about community resources available to you.

Resources and COVID-19 related guidance are updated on the AFKA and ALIGN websites regularly. Make sure to check back regularly for the most up to date information.

The [**Caregivers Resource and Guidance: Caregivers, this is for you!**](#) will answer many of the questions you may have about resources available to you and about COVID-19:

- ◆ Planning for your family
- ◆ COVID-19 and Family Based Care
 - Choose and Use non-medical face coverings
 - Monitor for symptoms
 - Prepare for Isolation
 - Isolate in your home
 - *COVID -19 Caregiver Preparedness Plan*
 - Care for a COVID-19 patient at home
 - Get and use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- ◆ Caregiver Wellness
- ◆ Caring for the Children in your Home
- ◆ Community Supports

For up to date information on **Alberta Health Services (AHS)** guidelines for families see:

<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>