

Family Guide for In-Person Home Visiting & Group-Based Services During COVID-19

Considerations for Families



Issued July 30th, 2020



Decisions about in-person services will be made in collaboration with the Family Support Program that your family is a part of. Virtual home visits/tele-intervention/virtual group-based services remain an option if your family has concerns about your family's safety and/or well-being and/or if you prefer virtual home visits/tele-intervention/virtual group-based services to continue.

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Where to Start the Conversation with your Home Visitor / Group-Based Facilitator

The Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS) recognizes that families need to understand and navigate a lot of information.

For example:

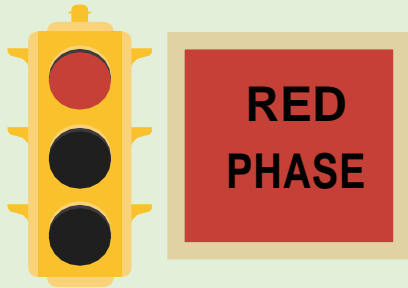
- The status of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania and your community
- The guidance that BEISFS is providing to Family Support Program leaders and Home Visitors
- Where to go for information related to COVID-19 and guidance
- What is your family's comfort level, as well as the potential risks and benefits of in-person services for your family

Resuming in-person home visiting and group-based services will only occur if your family is comfortable with this option.

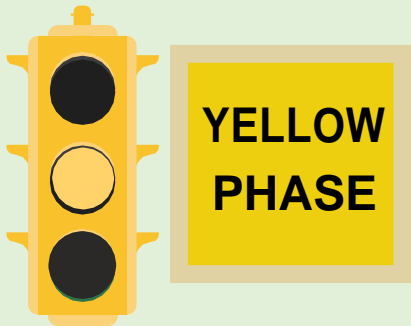
Virtual home visits/tele-Intervention/virtual group-based services will continue to be available as a delivery method of services.

***★ Look for this icon for additional resources.
Resources are located at the end of this document.***

Step 1: Know about COVID-19 in your community and guidance for Family Support Programs



- Face-to-face Family Support services are suspended and the use of virtual home visits/tele-intervention is encouraged. This includes both home visiting and group-based Family Support services.
 - Groups may be offered through virtual platforms if it is an approved model service delivery strategy.
 - Screenings are conducted only virtually.
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- Virtual home visits/tele-intervention to deliver Family Support services and screenings continue.
 - In-person group-based Family Support services remain suspended.
 - Groups may still be offered through virtual platforms if it is an approved model service delivery strategy.
- Family Support programs may identify a need to schedule an in-person screening if the screening cannot be completed remotely. There may also be a need to provide services in the home if the family does not have access to technology that allows services to be delivered through virtual home visits/tele-intervention.
- Family Support programs housed within or utilizing school buildings for services must also follow the Pennsylvania Department of Education guidance for reopening school buildings.



- Virtual home visits/tele-intervention/virtual group-based services to deliver Family Support services and conduct screenings should continue unless there is minimal concern for the spread of COVID-19 in the Family Support programs service area.
- Face-to-face services may resume:
 - Including all in-person group-based Family Support Services.
 - Per OCDEL before beginning services, all Family Support Programs must have a health and safety plan.
- Family Support programs housed within or utilizing school buildings for services must also continue to follow the Pennsylvania Department of Education guidance for reopening school buildings.



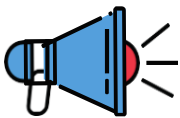
Step 2: Know and Understand the Screening Questions

Prior to **every in-person home visit and group-based service**, families will be asked the following screening questions. The purpose is to identify your risk of transmitting COVID-19 and your risk of complications should you or a family member become infected. Your Home Visitor or Group Facilitator will be assessing their risk of transmitting COVID-19 prior to asking you these screening questions.



1. Has anyone in the home tested positive for or suspected of having COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
2. Does anyone in the home have signs or symptoms of a fever, new or worsening cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, congestion, nausea, vomiting, or other respiratory illness?
3. Has anyone in the home had contact within the last 14 days with someone with or awaiting test results for COVID-19?
4. Has anyone who will be present during the visit or group session* (*for green phase only) traveled outside of Pennsylvania in the past 14 days?
5. Will a person with a weakened immune system, a person who is over the age of 65 years, or a person that has chronic health conditions (e.g. heart disease, lung disease, diabetes), or other factors that pose a risk if the person becomes infected with COVID-19 be present during the visit or group session?* (*for green phase only).

If your Home Visitor is not able to contact you before the in-person home visit and decides to proceed with the visit, the Home Visitor will ask these health screening questions prior to entering the home. The Home Visitor should stand approximately six feet from the doorway when asking these questions. Families will also continue to be contacted prior to all group-based services by their Family Support Program Group Facilitator.



If the Home Visitor believes they are at risk of transmitting COVID-19 or the response is **YES** to any of the first three questions above, the Home Visitor will coordinate with you to schedule a virtual home visit/tele-intervention session instead of an in-person visit.

If the response is yes to question(s) #4 and/or #5, the Home Visitor and your family will discuss the possible risk in delivering an in-person session and document the decision. Virtual home-visits/tele-intervention will be an option for service delivery.

The same process will occur for in-person group-based services. Virtual group-based services will be an option for service delivery if this is the best option to maintain the safety of all group participants.

Step 3: Considerations for your family

Who is at Risk for COVID-19 and How is it Spread? ★

- Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19.
- Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more severe illness (including pregnant women).
- You can become infected by coming into close contact (about six feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19.
- COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person.
- You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You may also be able to get it by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
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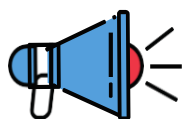
You may wish to consider these questions.

- What questions do I have for my family's Home Visitor/Family Support Program Group Facilitator about how they will help to keep my family safe?
- Will I be able to stay about 6 feet away from my home visitor? What about other family members who will be a part of the home visit? What about my child?
- Will I be able to stay about 6 feet away from all participants in an in-person group setting? What about other family members who might participate? What about my child?
- How could I limit the surfaces (such as toys, household objects you might use during the visit as well as surfaces, doorknobs, tables, chairs etc.) that anyone involved in the visit (family members, home visitor, me) touch? Will I be able to disinfect surfaces that would be touched?
- How will my Family Support Program clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (toys, counters, door knobs, chairs, serving utensils, etc.) and/or limit shared items (food, pens/pencils, equipment, etc.) during in-person group-based services?
- Who else does my family interact with that might be at a greater risk if they were to be exposed to COVID-19?
- Do these considerations affect my comfort level? Is there anything that could make me feel more comfortable?

Home Visitors and Group Facilitators will be wearing a mask or cloth face covering during in-person Family Support services. Adult family members who participate in the session are required to wear a mask or cloth face covering as per the DOH order requiring universal face coverings.

Any child over the age of 2 or adult, not including Family Support personnel, who cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition, including those with respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition, or disability is encouraged to wear a full-face shield. Additionally, social distancing between non-household members must be in place for the duration of the in-person service. ★

Step 3: Continued: Considerations for your family



Home Visitors/Family Support Program Group Facilitators will be wearing a mask or cloth face covering during in-person Family Support services. Adult caregivers who participate in the home visit/group session should also wear a mask or cloth face covering.

For more information about PA DOH's Order on Universal Face Coverings, what type of masks comply with this order, and additional CDC guidance, go to the resource section.

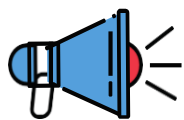


Virtual Home Visits/Tele-Intervention/Virtual Group-Based Services: What Have You Learned?

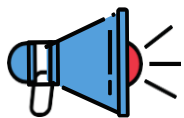
What has been successful and challenging regarding virtual home visits/tele-intervention/virtual group-based services? Virtual home visits/tele-intervention/virtual group-based services are new service delivery methods for some program models in Pennsylvania. Virtual home visits/tele intervention/virtual group-based services are the lowest risk service delivery methods. As you consider what is/is not working, collaborate with your Home Visitor/Family Support Group Facilitator to determine if making changes to how you are implementing your virtual home visits/tele-intervention/virtual group-based services, planning to move to in-person services, or a combination of virtual home visits/tele-intervention for home visiting services or a combination of in-person/virtual sessions for group-based services is the best fit for your family. Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) and your local Family Support Program are providing professional development to assist both Home Visitors/Family Support Group Facilitators and families to increase the effectiveness of these service delivery methods.

You may wish to consider these questions.

- What priorities do I have for my family?
- What (if any) challenges have come up with virtual home visits/tele-intervention/virtual group-based services?
- Can these challenges be addressed through additional support for my family or professional development for my Family Support program; or by discussing when and how virtual home visits/tele-intervention/virtual group-based services are delivered?
- What aspects of virtual home visits/tele-Intervention/virtual group-based services have been successful?
- What have I learned about my family and their home visiting/group-based services during this time?



Together, your Family Support Program can individualize services to meet your family's needs and comfort level. Services don't need to be 100% virtual home visits/tele-intervention or 100% in-person. For group-based services, your Family Support program could offer virtual attendance options in addition to in-person attendance. **The key will be communication with your Home Visitor or Family Support Program Group Facilitator.** Look at your Family Support programs services in a way that allows for flexibility. The use of virtual home visits/tele-intervention/virtual group-based services as a means for service delivery will remain available.



Consider talking with your own health care provider, the health care provider of your child and other family member's health care provider if you have specific concerns related to health conditions and/or risks associated with COVID-19 and resuming in-person home visiting and group-based services.

Step 4: Once you decide to start in-person services, what to expect



Stay Informed

- Know what your Family Support provider is doing to implement CDC and PA DOH guidance.
- Family Support Programs must develop a health and safety plan prior to any in-person service delivery.
- Family Support Programs housed within or utilizing school buildings for services must follow the PDE guidance for reopening schools based on their school districts Health & Safety Plan prior to any in-person service delivery.
- Ask questions and share any concerns with your Family Support Program.



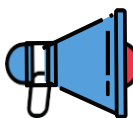
Remain Aware

- Continue to monitor your health, the health of your child and other family member's health.
- Keep up to date on guidance from PA DOH, PDE & CDC.
- Know what is happening in your community related to the spread of COVID-19.



Stay Safe

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after the home visit/group-based session.
- Clean surfaces (door handles, toys, shared household items, other hard surfaces) both before and after a home visit. Your Family Support Program will clean surfaces for in-person group-based services.
- As much as is reasonable, maintain a six-foot distance between your family members participating in the visit and the Home Visitor.
- Understand your Home Visitor/Family Support Group Facilitator will be required to wear a mask or face covering. Keep in mind, their mask helps to protect you, your family members, and child. Adults from your family participating in the session will need to wear a mask/cloth face covering.
- Children under the age of two should not wear a mask or cloth face covering. Your family will be asked to have and wear masks for your use during services. (Your Home Visitor/Family Support Group Facilitator) will have their own mask/cloth face covering.)
- The risk of transmission of COVID-19 is lessened during outside activities. Consider if services outside are a safe and reasonable option for your family.
- If home visits will be provided indoors, consider opening windows and ensuring ventilation. For indoor group-based services, your Family Support Program will ensure proper ventilation and circulation of outdoor air during the group session.
- The risk of possible transmission of COVID-19 increases with time spent in close proximity. Consider if there are portions of your home visit that could occur virtually or through tele-intervention. Virtual group-based services also remain an option.



Virtual home visits/tele-intervention/virtual group-based services can continue and/or resume if your family has concerns related to health/safety, or if you feel they are the most appropriate way to address your family's priorities.



Pennsylvania and Federal Guidance for Family Support Providers

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Business and Workplaces

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html

COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses (Pa DOH)

www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Businesses.aspx

PA Department of Education Preliminary Guidance Phased Reopening of Schools

www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/Pages/default.aspx

Pennsylvania and Federal Guidance Regarding Masks

PA DOH Universal Face Coverings Order

www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/20200701-SOH-Universal-Face-Coverings-Order.pdf

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Use Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.htm

Resources for creating masks to support communication

<https://www.myodp.org/mod/book/view.php?id=25106&chapterid=184>

Keeping Up to Date on COVID-19 in Your Community

Pennsylvania DOH COVID-19 Page

www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx

Pennsylvania DOH COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard

www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx

Additional Resources to Help Keep Your Child & Family Safe

Center for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.htm

Center for Disease Control (CDC) How to Protect Yourself and Others

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Caring for Children

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/caring-for-children.html

Center for Disease Control (CDC) People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.htm

PA Early Intervention & Early Childhood Resources

Early Intervention Technical Assistance Portal Resources to Support EI Work During COVID-19

www.eita-pa.org/resources-to-support-ei-work-during-covid-19

PA Promise for Children

papromiseforchildren.com

Talking to Children about COVID-19

PA Dept. of Education- Talking to Children about COVID-19

www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/TalkingtoChildren/TalkingtoChildrenCOVID19/Pages/default.aspx

Sesame Street Talking to Children About COVID-19

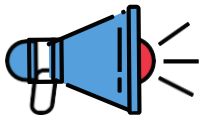
www.sesamestreet.org/caring

Resources to Support Your Child from National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations

Wearing Masks: These scripted stories, with their colorful and fun photographs of children and families, help explain to children the how, why, and when of wearing face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also available in Spanish. http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Wearing-Masks_Story.pdf

Helping Children Understand Emotions When Wearing Masks: These tips and ideas help children identify emotions when faces, our most expressive feature, are covered by a mask. Parents and practitioners can use these strategies to let children know that behind the mask, a kind and warm expression is still there. http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Wearing-Masks_Tipsheet.pdf

Greetings While Social Distancing: This colorful greeting board uses expressive photos of children to demonstrate ways to greet each other while maintaining social distancing. In English and Spanish, the examples included are air hug, elbow bump and thumbs up. http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Greeting-Board_EN-SP.pdf



If you have questions or concerns about your Family Support services, contact your Home Visitor/Family Support Group-Based Facilitator or Family Support Program as a first step. They can assist you to understand and navigate this information and help to address your questions and concerns.

