

Procedure for Child / Parent Visits

Steps

1. Supervised visits should occur in accordance with the terms and conditions that were in place prior to the onset of COVID-19. Thus, visits should have the same frequency, duration, supervision and locations (such as in the family home). The arrangements for these visits should be consistent with the terms and conditions set out in the orders granting those visits.
2. In new cases or in cases where there is a change of circumstances, the clinical team (family permanency advisor, resilience advisors, collaborators and supervisors) will meet to determine whether it is possible to start / continue supervised visits at the family home, in accordance with the parameters set out in the court order if one exists. The case advisor will schedule the meeting with their co-workers.
 - a. During their discussions, the clinical team will take into account the factors set out in this Protocol. The clinical team will consult the biological parents and the foster parents before making a decision. Advisors will also visit the biological parents' home to determine whether it is suitable and conducive to such visits, and to choose the places (rooms) where the visits could take place.
 - b. Based on those discussions, if it is determined that the visits can not take place at the family home or that the terms and conditions set out in the order cannot be met, the clinical team will consult with the legal department as soon as possible. Similarly, in case of doubt or disagreement about the decision, the clinical team will consult with the legal department. Ultimately, the decision will be up to management.
3. It is always possible for the clinical team to vary the visitation schedule (i.e.: increase the frequency, change the location of the visit, change the participants, etc.) if this change is in accordance with the child's best interest. However, before making such modifications, the clinical team will again consult the biological parents and the foster parents. Ultimately, the decision to vary the schedule rests with the clinical team, in consultation with the legal department.

Specifics of Supervised Visits

- Most supervised visits will take place in the biological parents' home. If the visits cannot take place in the home of the biological parents or kin, they will take place at a Valoris facility or in the community.
 - o Non-supervised visits may also take place in the home of the biological parent, a kin or the foster parents, or in the community. The details of these visits will be determined by the case advisor and supervisors.
- Visits will be supervised by the case advisor or collaborator, or by a collaborator designated by the service centre. The clinical team may also decide that the visits be supervised by kins once all proper evaluations have been made.
- The majority of the visits will be limited to no more than six (6) people, including the person supervising it.
 - o Even if six people are authorized, those will be limited to the biological parents, adoptive parents, anyone having a visitation right established in an order, and those who had care of the child before the removal.
 - o In most cases, the visits will be limited to immediate family members.
 - o If there are more than six people in the immediate family, the case advisor and supervisor will determine whether the visit can proceed safely with everyone present.
 - o If it is in the child's best interest to include more persons in the visits, this will be allowed as long as the total number of individuals present does not exceed ten (10) and the visit occurs outside. The case advisor or supervisor needs to have pre-approved the presence of these other individuals before the day of the scheduled visit and will need to inform the clinical team of this addition, including the person who will be supervising the visit and the foster parents.
- The number of hours and frequency of visits will occur as set out in the order. Visits are no longer limited to two (2) hours, once a week.
 - o In cases where we are trying to reintegrate the child under his parents' care, the number of hours of the visits can be increased as long as it is legally possible. However, a discussion must first occur within the clinical team, who will also consult the foster family. Ultimately, the clinical team will take the final decision, in consultation with the legal department.

- Supervised visits that take place in a Valoris facility will be scheduled in the following time slots:
 - slot 1: 9 to 11 a.m.
 - slot 2: 12:30 to 2: 30 p.m.
 - slot 3: 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. (or 4 to 6 p.m.)
 - These times must be respected to allow enough time between visits to properly clean the rooms. Any change will require the agreement of the maintenance crew to ensure that the room can be cleaned in time for the next visit.
 - School-age children and parents who work during the day will be given priority for slot 3.

- Inasmuch as possible, visits in the home will not take place during meal times. If a meal must be served during a supervised visit (because the visit extends over more than three hours), people may remove their masks while they eat, but will have to stay two metres apart from one another.
 - Snacks will be provided by the foster home or the family with whom the child has been placed.
 - If the visit goes over three hours, the biological parents are responsible for feeding the child.

- The case advisor will notify the parents about the procedures to follow during the visits, for instance:
 - Everyone participating in the visit must wear a mask, even if the visit is taking place in their home.
 - Every participant's temperature will be taken before the visit.
 - The advisor will ask the biological parents whether they have a thermometer. If they do not, the advisor will provide one before the first visit, or will ask the collaborator to bring one to the first visit. That thermometer will remain the property of the biological family, and will not be returned to Valoris.
 - It should be noted that this is not the same kind of thermometer that is used in the Valoris service centres. This is a standard thermometer. Standard thermometers can be picked up at Valoris service centre reception desks.
 - COVID-19 screening questions will be asked before the visit.
 - Parents will have to ensure that their home is suitable for the visits (clean and safe).
 - Parents will have to ensure that toys are limited to 10 and are cleaned before every visit.

- Parents and their children will not be able to kiss each other on the face.
- **The day of the visit** (these instructions apply to visits in both the Valoris facilities and in the family home, unless otherwise indicated):
 - The employee supervising the visit will contact every concerned party (parents and children) to go through the COVID-19 screening questions with them.
 - Go to <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/> for the screening questions about COVID-19. The EOHU recommends checking this site every time you need to screen someone because the information is updated daily.
 - Employees will have to self-assess.
 - Employees must note the answers to the screening questions in the app on their phone.
 - If an answer by any of the parties is positive, the employee supervising the visit shall contact all of the parties to advise them that the visit is cancelled. The case advisor will then be responsible for following up with the person displaying symptoms to inform him that the visits will only recommence in one of the following situations:
 - a) 10 days after the symptoms disappear (if the person has not gone to get a COVID-19 test); or
 - b) 24 hours after the symptoms disappear if the person went to get a COVID-19 test and obtained a negative result; or
 - c) after the instructed self-isolation period is over if the person was tested and obtained a COVID-19 positive result – Note: If the person still has symptoms after the instructed isolation period, he will need to wait 24 hours after the symptoms disappear to resume his visits.
 - 2 exceptions:
 - If the visit is scheduled for 9 a.m., the employee supervising the visit will contact the concerned parties (parents and child) after 3:30 p.m. the day before to ask the screening questions.
 - Before starting the visit, the employee supervising it will ask the participants whether anything has changed since the day before (see section entitled “Upon arriving for the visit”).
 - If the visit is scheduled for a Saturday or Sunday and is not supervised, the 24/7 worker will contact the biological parents to ask the screening and temperature questions. In regards to the

child, the foster family will call the 24/7 line to provide the data on the child.

- If the employee responsible for supervising the visit has to drive a child or parent in his/her own car, he/she will ask the screening questions and take the child's or parent's temperature before letting them into his/her car. He/she will make a note of the answers in the app on his/her phone. He/she will also self-assess before letting the client into his/her car.
 - *** If an answer by any of the parties is positive or a party has a high temperature (38⁰ Celsius or more), the employee supervising the visit shall contact all of the parties to advise them that the visit is cancelled. The case advisor will then be responsible for following up with the person displaying symptoms to inform him that the visits will only recommence in one of the following situations:
 - a) 10 days after the symptoms disappear (if the person has not gone to get a COVID-19 test); or
 - b) 24 hours after the symptoms disappear if the person went to get a COVID-19 test and obtained a negative result; or
 - c) after the instructed self-isolation period is over if the person was tested and obtained a COVID-19 positive result – Note: If the person still has symptoms after the instructed isolation period, he will need to wait 24 hours after the symptoms disappear to resume his visits.
 - An employee who drives a child or a parent to a Valoris facility will follow Valoris' transportation protocol ([Protocole pour les transports](#)).
 - For a visit at a Valoris facility, the employee will be able to get a thermometer at the reception desk. In case the thermometer does not work properly, there is a “back-up” at the reception desk.
- **Upon arriving for the visit** (these instructions are for every visit to a Valoris facility or the family home unless otherwise indicated):
 - Upon their arrival, children aged 2 and over, parents and the employee must wear a mask.
 - Exceptions:
 - Children under 5 years of age (but over 2) who refuse to wear a mask do not have to wear one unless one of the adults present can convince the child to do so.

- Anyone with a health issue who is unable to safely wear a mask (including breathing problems or cognitive issues) or who cannot put on or take off a mask without assistance.
 - If a parent or a child refuses to wear a mask (other than in a case listed as an exception) or to visit outdoors and follow the physical distancing measures, the visit will be cancelled. If a parent cannot wear a mask due to an exception, the two-metre physical distancing will have to be maintained during the visit, whether it is outdoors or indoors.
- When they arrive, everyone involved in the visit must sanitize their hands.
 - At Valoris: hands must be sanitized right before entering the room, including every time a person leaves the room and re-enters. Hand sanitizer (Purell) is available at the entrance to each service centre and in each meeting room.
 - At the home: hands must be sanitized right before entering the home, including every time a person leaves the home and re-enters. The employee supervising the visit will bring hand sanitizer to the visit (available in their PPE kit, and can be refilled at the service centres).
- The employee supervising the visit will take the temperature of every person participating in the visit, including his/her own. He/she will then make note of the results in his/her contact registry (if the visit is at Valoris) or in the app on his/her phone (if the visit is at the parents' home).
 - *** If a party has a high temperature (38⁰ Celsius or more), the employee supervising the visit shall contact all of the parties to advise them that the visit is cancelled. The case advisor will then be responsible for following up with the person displaying symptoms to inform him that the visits will only recommence in one of the following situations:
 - d) 10 days after the symptoms disappear (if the person has not gone to get a COVID-19 test); or
 - e) 24 hours after the symptoms disappear if the person went to get a COVID-19 test and obtained a negative result; or
 after the instructed self-isolation period is over if the person was tested and obtained a COVID-19 positive result – Note: If the person still has symptoms after the instructed isolation period, he will need to wait 24 hours after the symptoms disappear to resume his visits.
 - If everyone has a normal temperature and is symptom-free, the visit can proceed.

- Thermometers are available at the entrance of every service center. For visits at the parents' home, the family's thermometer can be used (the advisor will have made sure that the family has a thermometer before the visit).
- At Valoris: everyone (employees and guests) taking part in the visit must sign the register at the service centre reception desk.
- At the home: before each visit, the employee supervising the visit must ensure that the home is suitable for the visit (clean and safe).
 - If the home is unsanitary, not clean or not safe (see the section on Criteria to be applied for explanations in that regard), the visit will be cancelled. Subsequent visits will take place at Valoris until the parents have properly cleaned their home and the advisor confirms that it is now suitable for visits.
- The employee supervising the visit will remind the participants of the measures to be followed during the visit (those measures are listed in the section entitled "During the visit").
- If the visit is at 9 a.m., the employee supervising the visit will ask the participants "Has your answer to any screening question changed since yesterday?".
 - If anyone answers "yes", the employee supervising the visit will have to once again ask all of the screening questions to determine whether the visit can proceed or whether it has to be cancelled due to the new symptoms.
- At the office: gloves are available at the service centre reception desk for anyone wishing to wear them during the visit.

- During the visit:

- At Valoris:
 - Everyone must wear a mask during the visit.
 - If the visit occurs outside, the mask is not an obligation, but individuals must then respect the social distancing requirements.
 - There can be no more than six (6) people in the room during the visit.
 - Toys should be selected before the visit by the employee supervising the visit. The employee can wait until the parent arrives before choosing the toys, but it is very important that the parent/child touch only the toys they want.

- The parents may not bring toys from home unless the person whose home the child lives in agrees.
 - The parents may bring new toys / presents to play with and/or to give the child during the visit.
 - Everyone must sanitize their hands before, during and at the end of the visit.
 - Proper practices must be encouraged:
 - Sneezing and coughing into the crook of the arm.
 - Avoiding touching one's eyes, nose or mouth.
 - Parents and children are not permitted to kiss each other on the face.
 - That being said, the employee supervising the visit must use his/her judgement. He/she must not act like an enforcer if someone kisses someone on the face. A visit should not be interrupted, but the employee should remind everyone of the importance of following the instructions, including that of avoiding kisses on the face. After the visit, if the employee believes that the parent has completely ignored the recommendations, the employee can check with his/her supervisor and the lawyer to reach a team decision. The employee will then get back to the parent to inform him/her of any concerns regarding failure to follow instructions.
 - Parents may use the designated washroom if required.
- **At the home:**
 - Everyone must wear a mask during the visit.
 - If the visit occurs outside, the mask is not an obligation, but individuals must then respect the social distancing requirements.
 - The parents will have to confirm that they have limited the number of toys available to the child, and that those toys were cleaned before the visit.
 - The child will not be allowed to walk around the home. Visits are limited to the areas designated by the employee (normally the playroom, living room, washroom and backyard).
 - Everyone must sanitize their hands before, during and at the end of the visit.
 - Proper practices must be encouraged:
 - Sneezing and coughing into the crook of the arm.
 - Avoiding touching one's eyes, nose or mouth.
 - Parents and children are not permitted to kiss each other on the face.
- **After the visit:**
 - If the foster parent has provided a change of clothing, the child will change into it before leaving the family home or Valoris.

- Once the child returns to the foster home, the foster parent will encourage the child to take a shower or a bath. The foster parent will then wash the child's clothes in hot water.
- At Valoris: the employee supervising the visit will notify the maintenance worker that the visit is over so that the room can be cleaned.
- The employee supervising the visit will consult his/her checklist and enter the necessary information in his/her contact register (the checklist is not downloaded).
- If a COVID-19 case is reported within 14 days after a supervised visit, Valoris will follow its internal protocol and apply the appropriate procedures regarding who should be notified of the positive result.

Removal of supervision

- If it is in the child's best interest to start removing the supervision during visits, the clinical team can do so if it is legally possible. The clinical team will consult the biological family and the foster family to determine what is the best plan to remove this supervision, be it gradual or all at once. Ultimately, the clinical team will have the final decision, in consultation with the legal department.
 - This plan could include one or many of the following elements: replace the full time supervision with partial supervision or spot checks; ask a kin to supervise the visits; have the visits in the community or at a kin's home; increase the number of hours of the visits and include sleepovers; etc.

Criteria to be applied (by the key players) in resuming visits to parents' homes

- 1- The most recent provincial / public health directives and recommendations.
- 2- Whether the parents prefer to have the visits take place at their home, at a Valoris facility or remotely (phone, internet)?
- 3- Whether the parents agree to the following rules:
 - a. Unless exempted from doing so, everybody must wear a mask during the visits, even in the parents' home.
 - i. If not, the visits will take place at Valoris, and masks will have to be worn unless an exception applies.
 - b. Everybody must sanitize their hands before, during and at the end of the visit.
 - c. Every participant's temperature must be taken.
 - d. Every participant must answer the COVID-19 screening questions.
 - e. The parents must clean their home before the visit to ensure that it is clean and safe for the visit.
 - i. If the home is not suitable for the visit, it will take place at Valoris.
 - f. The parents may not kiss the child's face during the visit.
- 4- Do the parents know and recognize the following symptoms of COVID-19:
 - a. fever,
 - b. cough,
 - c. sore throat, and
 - d. severe shortness of breath?
- 5- Does anyone living in the parents' home show symptoms of COVID-19?
 - If yes, there will be no visits in the home as long as the symptoms are present and for 14 days after the symptoms disappear.
- 6- Is the home suitable for supervised visits?
 - a. If the conditions are unsanitary, the visits cannot take place in the parents' home.
 - b. If it is obvious that the home has not been cleaned for some time (e.g. lots of dirty dishes, dirty floors, lots of dust), the visits cannot take place in the home.
 - c. If the home is not safe, the visits cannot take place in the home.
- 7- Is the child considered to be at high risk of contracting COVID-19?
 - a. If yes, can the child wear personal protective equipment (mask, gown and gloves)?
- 8- Is either of the foster parents or another child living with them considered to be at high risk of contracting COVID-19?

- a. If yes, would it be possible to use personal protective equipment (mask, gown and gloves), and would that solve the problem?
- 9- Will the foster family request a transfer if the visits take place at the parents' home?
- a. If yes, can additional safety measures be used to reassure the foster parents?
 - b. If the foster parents indicate that a transfer is inevitable if the visits take place at the parents' home, the impact of such a transfer on the child will have to be assessed.
- 10- Any other factor to be taken into consideration in the situation.

It is important to remember that the following factors remain in effect:

- 11- Have the parents been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
- If yes, no face-to-face visit during the 14-day isolation period.
- 12- Have the parents just returned from a trip or been in contact with anyone returning from a trip abroad in the past 14 days?
- If yes, no face-to-face visit during the 14-day isolation period.
- 13- Have the parents taken the plane or train the past 14 days?
- If yes, have the parents been asked to isolate for 14 days? If yes, no visit. If no, the visit can go ahead.

Additional criteria to be taken into consideration when a child (in temporary or extended care) visits its parents in their home without supervision

- 14- Do the parents know how to keep the child safe from COVID-19?
- 15- When the child is visiting his parents, do they agree to limit all contact with people not living in their home or people that Valoris have not preapproved?
- This means that the child may not have friends or other family members not living in the home visit unless Valoris has preapproved that these individuals be present for the visit.
- 16- Can the parents abstain from going out during the visit?
- a. If a parent has to go out during the visit for an emergency, unless the emergency involves the child, will the child stay behind on its own (assuming it is old enough and mature enough)?

VARIATIONS during LOCKDOWN periods

In the event that Ontario issues a Lockdown / Stay at home Order (as it did in December 2020 /January 2021 and again in April / May 2021), all scheduled visits between children and their parents will continue as described in this Protocol, but with the following amendments:

- Visits will be limited to family members or anyone having a visitation right established in an order. No extended family member or friend will be allowed to participate in the visits.
 - o Other than the children, the visits will be limited to the individuals living at the same address. Hence, if the parents are separated, we will offer one supervised visit to each parent, individually.
- Visits that need to be supervised will be supervised by a Valoris employee because kins will not be able to supervise visits, except for KINS where the child already resides.
- Visits that were supposed to occur at group homes might no longer be authorized by the group homes. Hence, arrangements will need to be made for Valoris employees to supervise these visits.
- Visits that were scheduled to occur in our offices will continue to occur in our offices as planned.
- Visits that were supposed to occur at the family home will occur at the family home unless the family home is no longer safe for the visits or the parents are not respecting the directives (see below in this Protocol to know when visits should occur at home vs at the office).

These changes will be applied to all files, such as:

- files before the court;
- files where the child is placed under the Society's extended care, with visits to his/her parents;
- files where the child is placed in kinship out of care or kinship in care;
- files where the child is placed under a Temporary Care Agreement (TCA); and
- files where the child lives with a parent, but we have stopped the other parent's visits with his consent to offer him supervised visits instead.