

MIECHV and HOPES-HFI Iowa Family Support COVID-19 Guidance

June 1, 2021

Introduction: During the COVID-19 Pandemic face to face contact was not recommended. As the availability to the COVID-19 vaccine has increased to the general population a limited return to face to face contact may be considered. Please remember as you consider offering face to face visits that both the family support professional and the enrolled family should feel comfortable with face to face interaction. Do not provide face to face services if the primary caregivers are uncomfortable. The use of virtual technology to conduct group-based parent education and home visiting continues to be an approved method of service delivery. All precautionary measures should be taken into consideration for any face to face visits under any of the circumstances listed below.

IF

Family Support Professional is fully vaccinated **AND** all adults in the family participating in the visit are fully vaccinated **AND** the family is comfortable with services provided in their home, services **may** be provided in the home.

IF

Family Support Professional is fully vaccinated **AND** all adults in the family participating in the visit are fully vaccinated **AND** the family is uncomfortable with services provided in their home, services **will** be provided virtually.

IF

Family Support Professional is fully vaccinated **AND** one or more adults in the family participating in the visit are not fully vaccinated, it is recommended that services be provided virtually. The Family Support Professional will refer the family to a vaccine location and provide education on vaccine safety.

IF

Family Support Professional is full vaccinated **AND** one or more adults in the family participating in the visit are not fully vaccinated, **AND** the unvaccinated adults are not members of a high risk group identified by the CDC, then the MIECHV or HOPES-HFI contractor may determine that the family circumstances warrant a face to face visit using all safety precaution measures including meeting outdoors for maximum air flow. The contractor shall notify their assigned IDPH contract manager within two business days that a face to face visit occurred where one or more adult family members were not vaccinated.

IF

Family Support Professional is not fully vaccinated services **will** be provided virtually.

The same decision making tree as listed above shall be followed for group based parent education. Family Support programs must continue to make services available virtually for families that cannot or do not desire to have face to face contact. Families must provide informed consent prior to a return to face to face services. The informed consent must include a provision that families may revoke the informed consent at any time.

A brief health screening (see attached for an example) should be conducted before the face to face visit to ensure that all family members, including children, are healthy. At any time if a family support professional is feeling unwell, they should not have face to face contact with enrolled families or co-workers.

Initial Iowa evaluation results demonstrate that the majority of families and providers both prefer a hybrid model (virtual and in-person) should continue to be provided. Both groups also feel that the quality of services has been maintained during the pandemic.

Precautionary COVID-19 Health Measures: In the context of this guidance, precautionary measures include all persons, over the age of two, which are unvaccinated, shall wear a face covering as described by the CDC. Children age 2 to 5 may have difficulty wearing a face covering properly or understanding social distancing. Contractors are responsible for supplying face coverings to enrolled family members that do not have access to a face covering. The family support professional will wash their hands before and after each visit for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol in lieu of handwashing when that is not possible as described by the CDC. Encourage all family members to practice hand washing at the start and end of a face to face visit. The family support professional will maintain at least six feet of distance between themselves and unvaccinated family members. The family support professional will minimize the number of personal items they bring into the family home such as purses, bags, coats, etc. The family support professional will sanitize all supplementary materials, such as toys, before and after lending to a family, as described by the CDC. When possible, the family support professional will provide face to face services outdoors or in an environment where maximum airflow is possible.

Fully vaccinated: In the context of this guidance, fully vaccinated means that the person has received the required doses of the vaccine at the intervals suggested by the CDC and the minimum amount of time has passed since the last dose for the vaccine to be most effective.