



# Guide for Maternal/Child Home Visitation During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This document is intended for informational and educational purposes and the recommendations should be followed to the extent possible in order to slow and stop the spread of COVID-19 but are not mandatory. These recommendations apply to agencies providing maternal/child home visiting services.

- I. **Background:** The National Alliance of Home Visiting Models recommends the use of remote or telehealth visiting through phone or interactive video conferencing (IVC) during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the health and safety of the home visiting workforce and families receiving the services.

Home visiting is a critical service for families and a source of significant support to families during this pandemic. The objectives of home visiting can be temporarily accomplished through remote or telehealth methods as demonstrated by home visitors in Oregon and across the nation. While useful and effective within the current circumstances, there is no intention at the state or federal level of replacing in-person visiting with these distance methods.

A coalition of state agencies and associations collaboratively developed these recommendations to include considerations a home visiting agency might use to promote safer, in-person visiting as an exception in individual circumstances. The coalition includes: Oregon Department of Human Services, Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries, Oregon Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs, Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Health Authority.

Ultimately, the determination of which method of visitation to use is a decision of the agency, in collaboration with their local public health authority (LPHA). Home visiting agencies have better understanding of the needs of the families they serve and the current circumstances in their communities.

- II. It is recommended that a home visiting agency:
  - Offer home visiting services through remote or telehealth methods until there is a COVID-19 vaccine that is widely available.

- Not conduct in-person (particularly in-home) visitation unless it is deemed essential for a particular family and COVID-19 precautions are taken, such as requiring that all parties over the age of 3 wear a face covering, and 6 feet of distance between individuals is maintained to the greatest extent possible.
- Staff decisions to conduct in-person visitation with a Supervisor in advance of the visit and document the reasons for the need for in-person visitation.
- Document the health and safety precautions that will be implemented during any the in-person visit.
- Consider the following when making decisions about in-person visitation:
  - » Individual perceptions of the risk of the pandemic vary and effect comfort with in-person contact.
  - » The individual circumstances of home visitors and families also vary.
  - » In-person contact requires agreement from all parties involved.
  - » Whether the in-person visit can take place outside in a way that both allows for privacy and confidentiality but assures physical distancing and the use of face coverings
  - » Whether the agency has a meeting space large enough to maintain physical distancing while wearing face coverings, in which cleaning protocols can be implemented
  - » Whether the number of families receiving an in-person contact can be limited to reduce the risk of the home visitor passing the virus from one family to another
  - » Follow [Oregon Health Authority's Interim COVID-19 Infection Control Guidance for Workers Providing In-home Personal Care](#) as appropriate.
  - » Review Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) on [identifying risk](#) and [precautions](#)
- Establish an agency [plan](#) for [resuming business](#) that includes:
  - » Assessment of workplace characteristics and risk
  - » Flexible leave policies
  - » Response to employee known or suspected [exposure](#) and/or [symptoms](#)
  - » Determining when an employee can return to work after exposure or illness
- Review and implement the OHA [general guidance for employers](#).
- Prioritize other services the family is receiving over in-person home visits.

## Additional Tools

- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) on [identifying risk](#) and [precautions](#)
- [OHA infection control guidance for workers providing in-home personal care](#)

*This guide will remain in place unless there is new evidence that causes a change, or they are replaced with federal guidance from the CDC.*



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