



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont  
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff  
Commissioner

Peter Mason  
Deputy Commissioner

June 5, 2020

Dear Individuals, Families, Guardians, and Providers:

This pandemic has affected each and every one of us in different ways. From not being able to hug a loved one, to losing a close friend, neighbor, co-worker or individual we support, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed us all.

For me, two of the hardest decisions I have ever been forced to make was to ban visitation in our residential settings and shut down most of our day and employment services. The department's mission and my personal priority throughout my career has always been to advocate for individuals with intellectual disability to live a full life as an active and engaged participant in the community. The decisions that have been made throughout this pandemic, out of necessity, have not reflected this. The department has been faced with unparalleled choices and risking the health and safety of the individuals we support and the staff that support them was a risk that we simply just could not take.

This communication, however, is to talk about the future.

DDS has solicited much feedback in the form of conversations and surveys on the future of DDS. We have also put together committees made up of internal and external (qualified providers and families) stakeholders to dive into what reopening DDS may look like.

Based on the work of these committees and the feedback we have received, DDS plans to move forward with reopening in the following ways:

### **Employment and Day Services**

As Connecticut moves forward with a phased reopening, individuals are being called back to work. We continue to encourage individuals, families, providers and the team to work together to create a plan for returning to the workforce in the safest way possible. DDS has issued tools to DDS case managers to help facilitate and guide this conversation.

For all other employment and day services, DDS anticipates the following next steps:

- DDS will be issuing a plan for phased reopening for employment and day services early next week (the week of June 8, 2020). The phased plan will include safety measures and capacity restrictions for employment day and providers along with a request for providers to create plans for their programming. Providers will be instructed to submit these plans to their designated regions by June 19, 2020.

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- DDS anticipates roll out and implementation of phase one of the employment and day service reopening on approximately July 15, 2020.
- DDS anticipates roll out and implementation of phase two on approximately September 1, 2020.
- DDS anticipates roll out and implementation of phase three on approximately October 1, 2020.

### **Visitation in DDS Residential Settings**

The most recent [extension](#) on the DDS visitation ban ends on June 14, 2020. DDS anticipates the following next steps:

- DDS will be issuing a plan for visitation to all DDS qualified providers prior to June 14, 2020. This plan will outline suggestions, recommendations and guidance for providers to implement at their discretion with implementation and rollout to begin visitation options on June 20, 2020.
- DDS will be issuing a third extension to the visitation ban until June 20, 2020 in which providers can begin with visitation rollout.
  - The third visitation ban extension will be issued prior to June 14, 2020 and include additional flexibilities based on statewide reopening plans.
- As the guidance allows for provider flexibility with implementation, DDS will be issuing separate guidance on the visitation timeline for campus-based settings (Southbury Training School and the public Regional Centers).

All guidance issued over the next few weeks will be accessible to public and will be posted on the DDS website under the [“COVID-19 Updates for Providers”](#).

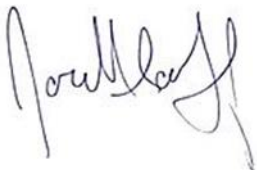
Although this communication does not include the specificity so many are eagerly waiting to hear, we hope that the timeline provides some form of comfort that change is upon the horizon. Our goal throughout this extraordinarily challenging and unprecedented time was to keep people healthy and safe. We believe this timeline and the subsequent information that will follow will allow for a thoughtful and comprehensive reopening process in the safest way possible.

The department will continue to monitor the exposure rates of the virus and may need to revise our plans should the state experience a spike in certain geographical areas or there is the development of a second wave to hit the general population.

Stay tuned for updates on respite, Camp Harkness, and training as well.

Thank you for patience and your resilience. We are all in this together and will get through this together.

Sincerely,



Jordan A. Scheff  
Commissioner  
Department of Developmental Services