

**MEMORANDUM**

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| **TO:** | **All DCF Staff** |
| **FROM:** | **Commissioner Vannessa Dorantes** |
| **DATE:** | **April 26, 2021** |
| **SUBJECT:** | **In-Person Visitation Contact and Re-Entry Capacity in Regional Offices** |

*Each and every one of you has done a remarkable job over the past 14 months to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children and families we serve. We have continued to conduct our mission critical work-- and then some, under extraordinary circumstances. History has been made with our unique and innovative efforts seen during the pandemic. Most importantly, families have been empowered and supported during this unprecedented time*

*Governor Lamont's Executive Orders permitted the Agency to alter policies and practices during the COVID-19 public health crisis, through the authority vested in agency leadership.*

*Connecticut is now moving closer to experiencing life and engaging in activities that occurred pre-pandemic. Schools are open for in-person learning, sports are active; restaurant capacity and other physical gathering places are less restrictive.*

*Special Act 21-2 ratified the Governor's authority to issue COVID-19 Executive Orders thru May 20, 2021. Therefore, we will be resuming our previously existing in-person visitation contact standards as of that date.*

*As activities around our state continue to open up, we remain being planful, thoughtful and leading with safety as we consider re-entry into our office spaces. We recognize it has been quite a long year and while we do not want to return to the offices all at once, we need to manage the amount of people inside of buildings while the pandemic is still among us. Setting up some guidelines allows us to hear from you and you from us.*

*This memorandum is to spell-out the resumption of previously modified in-person contact expectations and re-entry capacity in the Regional/Central Offices.*

**In-Person Contact**

By 5/20/21, in accordance with agency policy, our in-person visitation standards are to fully resume as they pertain to:

* Visits between youth placed into DCF facilities and their families
* Monthly/twice-monthly visitation on active cases
* Parent/child visitation for youth in DCF care and custody
* Foster home/facility licensing activities

Effective 5/20/21, the current in-person visitation triage process will no longer be utilized.

Consistent with pre-pandemic protocols, Managerial discretion will determine any exceptions to in-person visitation and this determination will be documented in LINK

Supervision, Meetings and Consults

Further guidance will be provided pertaining to in-person contact during Court proceedings, Considered Removal meetings, Administrative Case Reviews, Regional Resource Group consults, supervision, internal consults and other aspects of our work.

**Increasing Re-Entry Capacity in Regional/Central Offices**

We have been operating at a capacity of no more than 10% in our Offices. By 7/1/21, our goal is to gradually increase the allowable capacity of staff in our Regional/Central Offices to **up to and no more than 50%**.

In order to achieve this goal, we are establishing the following timeframes:

* Up to and no more than 30% of staff by the end of April
* Up to and no more than 40% of staff by the end of May
* Up to and no more than 50% of staff by the end of June

Again, the goal here is to control for the number of employees physically in an office at any given time while not exceeding 50% of capacity.

Please understand these expectations may change according to our authorizing agents and virus transmission rates. Connecticut remains a leader in the country. We will continue to be vigilant in our planning and actions.

Thank you for all you have done during these very difficult times.