

# Child Care Virtual Visits



Visits will look and feel different.

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Licensing Division has moved toward a compliance approach and many regions have started assisting others in conducting visits virtually.

What does that mean for you? It means that the licensor contacting you prior to the visit and completing your visit with you may not be your “assigned licensor.”

We are committed to timely and excellent customer service for the providers, children and families we serve.

After you have read through this document, if you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your local early learning child care licensing office ([www.dcyf.wa.gov/find-an-office/el-offices](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov/find-an-office/el-offices)).

## Before the Visit:

- Licensing staff will contact the provider to talk through what items the provider can submit electronically to expedite the virtual visit.
- Licensing staff will contact the provider to determine which platform to use (e.g., Skype, FaceTime, Zoom). At the same time, licensing staff will ask questions such as:
  - Is the platform the provider has mobile or stationary?
  - How is the internet connection at the facility?
- Licensing staff will go over expectations and, at the same time, the provider should let licensing staff know of potential barriers and special circumstances that may impact the visit.
- Licensing staff will review facility and staff information in MERIT accounts.

## Suggestions of ways to expedite the virtual visit.

Have your:

- First aid kit available
- Thermometer for water temp testing (if available)
- Ruler or measuring tape (if available)
- Additional staff or family members available to assist
- Staff records updated in MERIT
- Child and staff files readily available
- Pet information available (if applicable)
- Transportation information available (if applicable)
- Individual child care plans available, medication authorizations, medication administration (if applicable)
- Post-it/sticky notes on hand
- Licensor sends the “talking points” for the monitor visit so the provider can review and be prepared to ask questions about a topic if needed



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## During the Visit:

- Licensing staff initiates the visit at the agreed upon time via the agreed to platform.
- Provider “shows” the facility via live stream.
- Licensing staff offers breaks as does the provider.
- If something occurs that interrupts or disrupts the visit, arrangements will be made to finish at another time.

## Helpful Tips

- Provider puts tabs or sticky notes on items that are identified to be corrected to go back to later – as a way to not lose track of which room or thing is being discussed. By using tabs and sticky notes, it will save time from stopping to document.
- Set the device down in a stationary location to avoid dizziness of moving cameras.
- Use Zoom for video and a regular call for audio.
- Break the visit into two parts or days; walk through and paperwork.
- Set the device down so the licensor can observe the room. You have the ability to step away if needed.

## Follow Up:

Once the virtual visit is complete, the licensor will prepare the Facility Checklist and Inspection Report and send to provider via email.

If additional technical assistance is required or compliance concerns that need to be explained to provider are in place – a follow up email or phone call is arranged.

If there are items of non-compliance to be corrected that require a recheck – arrangements will be made for a follow up virtual visit to “see” the corrections. These are the same concerns that existed pre COVID-19 – not additional WAC. Currently, most Health and Safety Verification Site Visits are paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## There are exceptions and these visits will be unannounced:

- When a WAC designated as an Immediate Risk is found out of compliance during the monitor visit.
- The combination and number of WAC found out of compliance escalates the risk to children in care.
- We do not have a determined timeline for when the Health and Safety Verification visits will resume more normal operations.

## Other licensing virtual visit facts:

- There is not a mandate or directive that visits are four hours long.
- Both parties have the choice to reschedule the visit. Some factors that may impact the visit include but are not limited to: power outages, staff shortages, family or child situations, COVID-19 related training or preparations, COVID-19 related meetings with other factors.

## Opt Out or Reschedule:

DCYF does not require four hours for virtual visits. DCYF has the flexibility to complete visits on different days and times that work for all parties. Reasons a provider may opt out or a remote monitoring visit might be rescheduled include:

- Computer trouble
- Power outage
- Staffing shortages
- Family or child situations that demand attention
- COVID-19-related training or preparations
- Meeting with local health or service partners in response to COVID-19
- Other (with DCYF approval)

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