

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES CIRCULAR

Date: February 25, 2022

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID-19 2021-61(r)

To: All Children's disABILITY Services and Funded Agency Staff

Subject: Resuming In-Person Services

Replaces: *COVID-19 2022-07 Update to in-person meetings/visits*

Type: Policy

Procedure

Effective Date: Immediately

New information is in bold

Effective immediately, all Children's disABILITY Services staff and funded agency service providers are encouraged to offer in-person meetings and service visits in family homes and community-based facilities. This applies to all services including case management, early intervention (child development and autism) and behavioural psychology services, as well as all agency-delivered services.

Revised to align with the [February 15, 2022 - Public Health Orders](#), staff/service providers are required to follow the direction in this circular on screening, personal protective equipment (PPE), physical distancing and other prevention measures in order to attend in-person visits.

Staff/service providers may continue to offer remote meetings/service visits when preferred by families or where required by circumstances as noted in this circular.

Self-Screening of Staff/Service Providers

Staff/service providers must [self-screen](#) for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure prior to attending in-person meetings.

Staff/service providers may attend in-person meetings, except if they are required to isolate or self-isolate (quarantined) due to:

- **having COVID-19 symptoms, even if they are mild or short in duration***
- **having recently tested positive for COVID-19**

Public health recommends self-monitoring for symptoms for people living in a household with others who have symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19. In consultation with their supervisor/organization, staff/service providers may attend in-person visits as long as they are not required to isolate or self-isolate (quarantine) as indicated above. Further, staff/service providers are encouraged to voluntarily inform attendees of their status as a close contact, allowing the attendees to decide if they want to proceed with meeting in person or remotely.

Staff/service providers should refer to [COVID-19 2022-03\(r\) Public Health Direction – Self-Isolation \(Quarantine\) Requirements and Exemptions](#) for further guidance on isolation timelines.

Pre-Screening Assessment of Meeting Attendees

Prior to the meeting, staff/service providers must complete a [pre-screening assessment](#) for all meeting attendees.

Staff/service providers may attend in-person meetings, except if any meeting attendees are required to isolate or self-isolate (quarantine) (see <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/fundamentals/self-isolation.html>) and, in such cases, the meeting should be held remotely or rescheduled. However, staff/service providers may attend in-person where any attendees are required to isolate or self-isolate (quarantine) *if the purpose of the visit is to address an urgent critical service need that cannot be adequately resolved remotely* (see Appendix A for critical service criteria); in this situation, staff/service providers must consult with their supervisor to determine how to proceed safely with the visit.

Note that families do not have to provide proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 test results in order for staff/service providers to visit in-person.

PPE Requirements for Staff/Service Providers

Staff/service providers are required to wear a medical mask for the duration of the visit. **Staff/services providers should refer to the following guidance on the proper use of [medical masks](#), including instructions on donning and doffing PPE.**

Staff/services provider may continuously wear a medical mask for multiple meetings, but they must change their mask if it gets wet, damaged, or soiled and/or at breaks (i.e. whenever a mask is removed).

Staff/service providers may choose to wear eye protection and it is encouraged where staff/service providers are unable to reliably maintain a distance of 2m/6' from others during the visit or when they are within close proximity to deliver services. However, staff/service providers must wear eye protection when attending in-person to address an urgent critical service need where screening indicates potential risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Where additional PPE (e.g. eye protection, gown, gloves) is required by the setting such as a school, child care or health care facility, staff/service providers are expected to adhere to the setting's PPE requirements.

Note that families are not required to wear PPE in their homes.

Physical Distancing

Staff/service providers should maintain a distance of 2m/6' from other attendees as much as possible throughout the entire visit.

However, interactions within close proximity are permitted for the purpose of delivering services such as child development, autism intervention and therapies.

Other Prevention Measures

Staff/service providers are reminded to always practice the fundamentals:

- Practise meticulous hand hygiene before, during and after in-person visits as well as for donning/doffing PPE.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Get [tested](#) if you have symptoms of COVID-19

Additional COVID-19 related information

- [COVID-19 Information for Staff page on RAMMI](#) (internal access only)
- [Manitoba Families – COVID-19 Notices and Circulars webpage](#) (public access)
- [Current Public Health Orders webpage](#) (public access)

Questions regarding this circular may be directed to Micheline Viallet, Leading Practice and Program Specialist, Children's disABILITY Services, at 204-794-6016.

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Appendix A

Critical Service Criteria

A critical service need is defined as one where, in the absence of service:

- There is imminent risk of family breakdown, which may or may not result in CFS involvement
- The parent will lose their employment
- The child with disabilities and/or parent is at risk of hospitalization
- The child with disabilities and/or parent is at risk of suffering an injury or experiencing a negative impact to their safety

If the answer to any of the above criteria is “Yes”, the service would be deemed critical.