

## Guidance for Home Visitors Supported by KDHE

*Version #1: March 16, 2020*

This guidance is based on what is currently known about the spread and severity of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The purpose of the guidance is to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among families and staff and to provide direction to home visiting agencies, families, and community partners to react quickly should a case be identified.

KDHE will provide updated guidance as necessary based on the changing situation. Please check the [CDC website](#) and the [KDHE website](#) (COVID-19 Resource Center) periodically for updated information and guidance.

### **Planning and Preparedness Recommendations for Home Visiting Programs**

Home visitors partner with parents to support the healthy growth and development of children. Services provided through home visiting programs are critical to ensuring the ongoing health and safety of children and families. **Therefore, it's important to public health and families that programs continue operations, as long as it is deemed safe to do so by state and local health officials.**

Home visitors are well positioned to assess, promote, and model good hygiene as well as provide guidance to clients and their families on how to stay safe, monitor their own symptoms, and when to seek medical care. Home visiting programs operating during the outbreak should:

- **First and foremost**, follow the guidance, policies, and procedures of your home agency and local county health department/local health officer. The most current information always resides at the community level.
- Stay informed and know where to go for the most current information. Sources of accurate information include the CDC, KDHE, and your local county health department/local health officer.
- Develop or update emergency preparedness and continuity of operations plans to address possible disruptions in program operations that include the following:
  - Critical functions and positions and plan for alternative coverage in the event of staff absences or closure;
  - Methods to communicate with staff and parents in the event of closure; and
  - Flexible sick leave policies that encourage staff to stay home when sick or when caring for sick family members.

### **Scheduling and Conducting Home Visits**

As a home visitor, practice self-care, personal hygiene, and social distancing. Follow all of your home agency's workplace policies and general guidance that includes staying home if you're sick, washing hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, and covering coughs and sneezes (in the arm/elbow).

At the time of scheduling a home visit, assess the family's situation by asking appropriate questions.

- Has there been travel within the last 14 days in a state or country identified as a hot spot?
- Has there been any exposure to an individual diagnosed with COVID-19?

- Is anyone in the home/family showing signs of illness including:
  - a fever greater than 100 degrees;
  - cough; and/or
  - shortness of breath.

If the answer to any of these questions is yes OR the family prefers not to have an in-person visit, the visit should be rescheduled for a later date or conducted virtually.

- As a general rule, reschedule the visit no earlier than at least 14 days. The 14-day recommendation is based on current guidance for self-quarantine related to COVID-19. Please refer to the [KDHE COVID-19 Resource Center \(http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/index.htm\)](http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/index.htm) for the most current recommendations for quarantine and isolation and how to prevent spread.
- KDHE supports the use of telehealth (telephone, text, secure phone line and video conferencing through platforms such as Zoom) rather than in-person home visits, when possible and appropriate, to keep families connected with the home visitors while practicing social distancing and managing community risks. Telehealth can/should to be used in lieu of in-person visits in cases where the client, anyone in the household, or the home visitor shows signs of illness noted above.

If there are no indications of risk/illness or the visit cannot be conducted virtually, proceed with the on-site visit as long as the family is comfortable doing so.

- Reassess risk by asking the same questions at the time of arrival and before entering the home/clinic/location for the visit. If the answer to any question is yes, act as directed above.
- Don't shake hands or touch others when greeting or interacting.
- Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer when soap and water isn't available.
- Limit unnecessary contact with surfaces/items and avoid shared use of tablets, laptops, writing utensils, and cell phones. Regularly wipe-down all items.
- Follow the current COVID-19 guidance to protect yourself and those you come in contact with.

### **More Information and Answering Questions Regarding COVID-19**

CDC Resources:

- [Coronavirus Disease](#)
- [Health Alert Network: Update and Interim Guidance on Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 Exposure in Travel-associated with Community Settings](#)
- [About Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [What to Do if You Are Sick with COVID-19](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Persons Who May Have Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) to Prevent Spread in Homes and Residential Communities](#)
- [Information on COVID-19: Pregnant Women and Children](#)
- [Guidance for People at Higher Risk for COVID-19](#)
- [Stigma and Resilience](#)

KDHE Resources:

- [KDHE COVID-19 Resource Center \(http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/index.htm\)](http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/index.htm)
- KDHE COVID-19 Information Line 1-866-534-3463 (1-866-KDHEINF)  
Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.