

**Department of Children and Families
Protocol for Out-of-State Extended
Travel for Children in Foster Care during COVID-19
Effective: October 2, 2020**

A travel order adopting a mandatory 14-day quarantine for travelers arriving in Massachusetts remains in effect to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The order applies to residents of Massachusetts returning from out-of-state travel, to residents of other states, and to any other persons who come to Massachusetts for personal or business travel (with limited exemptions described in the attached travel questionnaire). To keep everyone safe during the current Public Health Emergency, the following process needs to be followed prior to extended out-of-state travel by foster parents with a child in the care or custody of the Department, including foster children living out of state through an Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).

Foster Family Notifies Family Resource Social Worker

The following guidelines should be considered prior to a foster family travelling overnight out of state. The Family Resource Social Worker needs to be notified that they wish to travel out-of-state. The foster family will be required to provide information on the attached Foster Family Travel Questionnaire.

Notifications within DCF

Once the Family Resource Social Worker has gathered this information, they should notify their Supervisor, Area Program Manager and the Clinical Social Worker, Supervisor and Area Program Manager for any child living in the foster home.

The Social Worker should notify the DCF Attorney for the child's case, who will inform the child's and parent's attorneys and determine if they have any concerns or objections.

Consideration/Consultation Process

Once the notifications have occurred and the information gathered, the child(ren)'s clinical staff and the family resource staff should meet and consider the following criteria in considering the request for out-of-state/country travel. The recommendation with the information gathered will be sent to the Area Director/Regional Director for review. Area or Regional Directors may seek a consultation from the Regional Nurse.

The following may need Central Office review with the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and/or General Counsel in consultation with the Medical Director:

- Destination has a high or increased rate of infection
- Jurisdiction has a high percentage of COVID positive test results or COVID related hospitalizations
- Travel is out of the country

- Travel plans include youth with underlying medical condition that puts them at higher risk for COVID-19 complications

Factors to be Considered

Child Information

- Name and age of child
- Any special medical needs/conditions the child has that need to be considered
 - Requires consultation with the Regional Nurse
- How long child has been in placement and how long with this foster family
- Child's permanency plan
- Legal status of child

Travel Information

- The Family Resource Social Worker should closely review the responses to the Foster Family Travel Questionnaire to identify any concerns about travel plans
- Services and Visitation (both while away and if need for quarantine when return)
 - Impact on Family Time visits
 - Impact on sibling visits
 - Impact on existing services