

Is CASA able to appropriately advocate for best interest without in-person visits?



- Maintain virtual contact at current (increased) frequency.
- Document in Optima that COVID-19 restrictions prevented face-to-face visit from occurring and how frequently contact is expected. Document both contact and attempts.



Would an in-person visit with the child and/or placement under the following conditions allow CASA to appropriately advocate for best interest?

- Visit must occur outside with 6 feet of distance between everyone at all times for no more than 30 minutes.
- Masks covering the nose and mouth are required for both the volunteer/staff and anyone over age 6 participating in the visit (child and family/placement).
- No entry into homes is permitted by the volunteer/staff.
- Volunteer/staff must confirm with placement and document in Optima that no one in the home is ill or running a fever on the day of the visit before the visit takes place.
- Volunteer/staff must take their own temperature and document in Optima that they themselves are not running a fever or ill the day of the visit and no members of their household are ill.
- No transporting of children is permitted.
- No overnight travel is permitted.



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- Maintain virtual contact at current (increased) frequency. Document in Optima that COVID-19 restrictions prevented face-to-face visit from occurring and how frequently contact is expected. Document both contact and attempts.
- Staff with a Program Managers ways to address current barriers. Consider the following:
 - What is keeping CASA from getting the information we need?
 - What can be done to remove those barriers?
 - Is CPS or an attorney able to assist?
 - Are there other sources or methods from which we can gather the information we need?
- Document in Optima and court reports what is limiting CASA's ability to advocate for best interests and what is keeping CASA from removing those barriers at this time.
 - E.g. "CASA has only seen the inside of the home via video conference due to restrictions implemented as a result of COVID-19. "
- **If exception to current CASA protocol is warranted, staff with Chief Program Officer for approval.**

Does the case meet any of the following criteria?

- **CASA has not been able to have regular virtual contact with the child or placement**
Rationale: We are unable to advocate for best interests if we have not had contact with the child because we cannot accurately assess safety or needs.
- **The child changed placements since virtual protocols went into effect, so CASA has not seen the child in the new placement**
Rationale: We cannot make good placement recommendations for a placement we have not seen.
- **The child had an incident report since the remote protocol started**
Rationale: Having already experienced a critical incident makes the child at higher risk for further harm.
- **The child has returned home (either return after removal in COS or return to monitor)**
Rationale: Children who have returned home are close to case closure and we cannot accurately assess further risk or safety without visiting, making it difficult to make best interest recommendations for case closure.
- **The child is in an RTC/shelter/group home**
Rationale: Children in RTCs are more isolated and at higher risk for maltreatment.
Note: Hospitals and jails are not included at this time because there is no safe way to visit those locations while maintaining precautions and the risk outweighs the potential reward.



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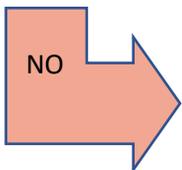


- Staff with a Program Manager to explain how a face-to-face visit would remove barriers to CASA's ability to advocate for best interest. Consider the following:
 - Are there other ways to remove the barrier and to get the needed information?
 - Are other parties able to assist with getting the information?
 - How has CASA attempted to address the barriers so far?
- Program Managers can staff up for exception to be approved by the Chief Program Officer.

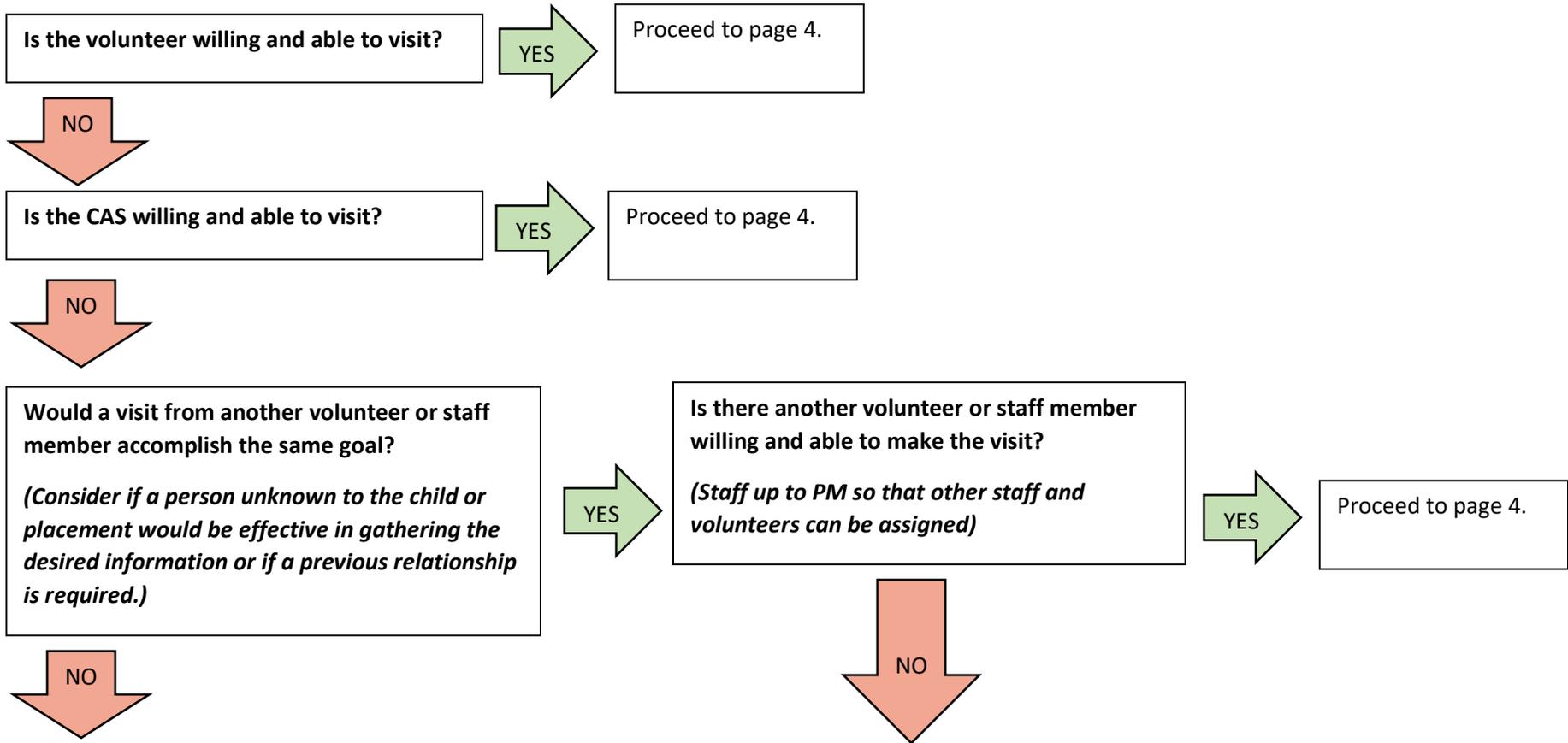


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Was face-to-face visit approved by the Chief Program Officer?



- Maintain virtual contact at current (increased) frequency.
- Document in Optima that COVID-19 restrictions prevented face-to-face visit from occurring.



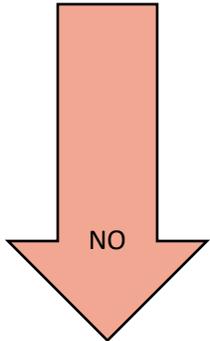
- Maintain virtual contact at current (increased) frequency. Document in Optima that COVID-19 restrictions prevented face-to-face visit from occurring, how frequently contact is expected. Document both contact and attempts.
- Staff with a Program Manager ways to address current barriers. Consider the following:
 - What is keeping CASA from getting the information we need?
 - What can be done to remove those barriers?
 - Is CPS or an attorney able to assist?
 - Are there other sources or methods from which we can gather the information we need?
- Document in Optima and court reports what is limiting CASA’s ability to advocate for best interests and what is keeping CASA from removing those barriers at this time.
 - E.g. “CASA has only seen the inside of the home via video conference due to restrictions implemented as a result of COVID-19.”
- **If exception to temporary CASA protocol is warranted, staff with Chief Program Officer for approval.**

Is the placement willing to allow the visit and is there a location that allows for the required conditions to be met (space outside, etc.)?



Proceed with visit under following conditions:

- Visit must occur outside with 6 feet of distance between everyone at all times for no more than 30 minutes.
- Masks covering the nose and mouth are required for both the volunteer/staff and anyone over age 6 participating in the visit (child and family/placement).
- No entry into homes is permitted by the volunteer/staff.
- Volunteer/staff must confirm with placement and document in Optima that no one in the home is ill or running a fever before the visit takes place.
- Volunteer/staff must take their own temperature and document in Optima that they themselves are not running a fever or ill the day of the visit and no members of their household are ill.
- No overnight travel is permitted.
- No transporting of children is permitted.
- Document visit in Optima within 24 hours, noting all parties present.



When children are unable to wear masks, maintain as much distance as possible.

- Document in Optima that the placement did not allow the visit or that there was not a location where required conditions for social distancing could be met.
- Maintain virtual contact at current (increased) frequency. Document in Optima that COVID-19 restrictions prevented face-to-face visit from occurring, how frequently contact is expected. Document both contact and attempts.
- Staff with Program Manager to determine next steps. Consider the following:
 - Does CASA have specific safety concerns about the placement?
 - Are caseworkers and attorneys able to make in-person visits? Can CASA attend with them or have them conference us in while they are there?
 - Can CASA advocate with the attorney to get the placement to allow a visit?
 - Can CASA make accommodations that would make the placement more comfortable with a visit (e.g. maintain 20 feet of distance, sanitize hands in front of them, stay in the car and visit from car window, etc.) and would visit still achieve the desired result if accommodations are made?
 - Are there other ways to supplement virtual visits that would allow CASA's concerns?
- **If exception to CASA protocol is warranted, staff with Chief Program Officer for approval.**

Documentation of decisions regarding visits during the alternative protocol is critical and should include:

- **How decisions were made and the rationale for each**
- **Who was involved in making the decision**
- **Final outcome of the decision**
- **That deviation from the visitation standard was a result of COVID-19 restrictions**