

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR
DUVAL, CLAY AND NASSAU COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-08

**IN RE: COVID-19 JUVENILE DEPENDENCY ORDERS REGARDING
VISITATION**

WHEREAS the World Health Organization has declared the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (hereinafter "COVID-19") a pandemic, the Governor of Florida has declared a state of emergency exists, the Mayor of Jacksonville has declared a state of emergency exists, the Florida Education Commissioner has suspended school until April 15, 2020, and the Surgeon General and State Health Officer have declared a public health emergency exists;

WHEREAS the Florida State Courts System must continue to take steps to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the courts, court participants, and the general public; and

WHEREAS on March 13, 2020, the Supreme Court of Florida entered Administrative Order No. AOSC20-13 regarding COVID-19 Emergency Procedures in the Florida State Courts, thereby suspending grand jury proceedings, jury selection proceedings, and criminal and civil jury trials during the period of Monday, March 16, 2020, through Friday, March 27, 2020, or as provided by subsequent order; and

WHEREAS, it is the interest of this order to have the Community Based Care Providers and Case Management Organizations fulfill their responsibility to the Court, the children and the parents to conduct visitation essential to the physical, mental and emotional health of children, their parents and caregivers in the safest manner possible while maintaining parent, child and sibling relationships; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of this order to direct the Department of Children and Families and its contracted agencies to postpone physical face to face visitation until April 15, 2020, or as further ordered by this Court.

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority conferred upon me as the Chief Judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit and pursuant to the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, it is hereby

ORDERED that:

1. All orders issued by the Circuit Courts of the Fourth Judicial Circuit requiring the Department of Children and Families and its subcontracted agents to make children available for physical contact visitation are suspended until April 15, 2020, or as further ordered by this Court.
2. All orders issued by the Circuit Courts of the Fourth Judicial Circuit requiring parents to attend physical contact visitation are suspended until April 15, 2020, or as further ordered by this Court.
3. The Department of Children and Families and its subcontracted agents shall employ face to face virtual visitation through electronic means such as Zoom, FaceTime, Skype or another such type program that allows the child(ren) to see their parent(s) and the parent(s) to see the child(ren). This order does not support any specific such electronic application over another.
4. Virtual visitation shall include non-visual text messaging, video messaging, audio/visual recording, voice calls and virtual face to face visitation.
5. The Department of Children and Families and its agents shall create Family Time Virtual Plans for electronic visitation that take into consideration the following: the age and maturity of the child(ren), the emotional and mental health of the child(ren), the daily schedule of the child(ren), caregiver and parent, the behavior of the child(ren) and behavior of the parent. The Family Time Virtual Plan will be as specific as possible in terms of scheduling as a set routine schedule is best for children.
6. The Department of Children and Families, Community Based Care Providers, Case Management Organizations, and the children's caregivers will supervise visitation with the parent or will select another individual to do so.
7. Should the parent or another party be of the opinion that the visitation must be conducted as physical in-person visitation, the party must file an appropriate motion with the court requesting such relief and a hearing will be conducted remotely.

DONE AND ORDERED at Jacksonville, Florida, on 25th day of March, 2020.


MARK H. MAHON
CHIEF JUDGE


- cc: All Judges of the Fourth Judicial Circuit
- All Magistrates in the Fourth Judicial Circuit
- The Honorable Ronnie Fussell, Clerk of the Court, Duval County
- The Honorable Tara S. Green, Clerk of the Court, Clay County
- The Honorable John A. Crawford, Clerk of the Court, Nassau County
- Joseph G. Stelma, Jr., Fourth Judicial Circuit Trial Court Administrator
- Eve Janocko, Chief Deputy Court Administrator
- Mike Smith, Court Technology Officer
- Julie Taylor, Court Counsel
- Judicial Staff Attorneys, Fourth Judicial Circuit
- Duval County Law Library
- Department of Children and Families
- Children's Legal Services
- Regional Counsel
- Guardian ad Litem Program
- Family Support Services of North Florida
- Children's Home Society
- Daniel Memorial
- Jewish Family Community Services
- Inspire to Rise
- Kids First of Florida
- The Jacksonville Bar Association
- The Clay County Bar Association
- The Nassau County Bar Association

STATE OF FLORIDA
DUVAL COUNTY

I, THE UNDERSIGNED Clerk of the Circuit Court, Duval County, Florida, DO HEREBY CERTIFY the within and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original as it appears on record and file in the office of the Clerk of Circuit of Duval County, Florida, and the same is in full force and effect.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the Clerk of Circuit Court at Jacksonville, Florida, this the 25 day of MAY A.D., 2020

RONNIE FUSSELL
Clerk, Circuit and County Courts
Duval County, Florida

By 
Deputy Clerk

