

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO:
20-16 2ND AMENDED
SUPERSEDES 20-16 AMENDED**

**IN RE: JUVENILE – COVID-19 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES JUVENILE DEPENDENCY
VISITATION PRACTICES**

WHEREAS the World Health Organization (WHO), the Federal Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Florida State Emergency Operations Center have devised systems to detect and monitor the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), a severe acute respiratory illness that can spread among humans through respiratory transmissions;

WHEREAS the WHO has declared COVID-19 a pandemic, the Governor of Florida has declared a state of emergency exists, and the Surgeon General and State Health Officer have declared a public health emergency exists, and the Florida State Courts System must, therefore, in an abundance of caution, take steps to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the courts and court participants; and

WHEREAS mitigating the effects of COVID-19 is a high priority in the Florida State Courts System; and

WHEREAS, a public health emergency currently exists in the Florida State Courts System that requires mitigation of its effects by adopting “social distancing” measures meant to reduce the increase in person-to-person transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the CDC has issued the 15 Days to Slow the Spread guidance advising individuals to adopt far-reaching social distancing measures, such as working from home and avoiding gatherings of more than 10 people; and

WHEREAS, the Florida State Court System must, in an abundance of caution, take steps to mitigate the effects and potentially devastating impacts of COVID-19, a highly contagious virus, on those involved in our dependency system, including on dependent and sheltered children, their families, caregivers and foster families, child welfare case management employees, child protective investigators, dependency attorneys, and other persons who are exposed through in-person contact, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the administrative authority conferred upon me by article V, section 2 of the Florida Constitution and Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215, IT IS ORDERED that:

1. All previous court ordered in-person parent/child, legal guardian or sibling visitation which requires the attendance of a DCF employee or contractor is suspended from the close of business on Monday, March 23, 2020, until close of business on May 15, 2020. In lieu of in-person visitation, to the maximum extent feasible, visitation must be conducted by electronic means with video communication preferred and telephonic communication permitted when video communication is not feasible. Upon the lifting of the state of emergency, the presiding judge may determine any appropriate make-up visitation.
2. Additional orders extending or modifying these measures will be issued as warranted by changing circumstances during the public health emergency.

DONE and ORDERED this 6th day of April, 2020.

LISA DAVIDSON
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CHIEF JUDGE

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