

Patty Baker, Clerk of Superior Court - Cherokee County, GA

**IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF CHEROKEE COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA**

**INTERIUM ORDER REGARDING COURT-ORDERED VISITATION  
IN DEPENDENCY CASES ASSIGNED TO JUDGE SUMNER**

The health safety and well-being of our children and families is paramount in any decision regarding visitation. Children and parents need to have contact with each other, particularly in these stressful times. Based upon the recommendations regarding the highly contagious nature of COVID-19 and the need for social distancing throughout our community, this court will not require face-to-face visitation at our visitation centers, in the community and in the home until further notice. The Court recognizes that bonding is important for the well-being of our foster youth and families. Visitation is also essential for reunification efforts. However, during this heightened precautions due to COVID-19, the Court is modifying all orders regarding visitation in dependency cases, as follows:

1. The Court is requiring that separated families maintain regular contact with each other.
2. The Court is not requiring in-person, face to face, visitation between parents and children. However, any in-person, face to face visits that can occur, are *encouraged to continue*.
3. DFCS shall work with parents and foster families to facilitate contact by video and telephone calls. (Example: FaceTime, Skype, Google HangOut, Facebook video chat, and other apps.) *The Court encourages frequent video calls as a preferred substitute for in-person visits.* (Example: Instead of visitation twice weekly, three to four video calls for ten to fifteen minutes each call.)
4. DFCS and custodians may expand contact and visitation to what the Court has previously ordered, consistent with the health, safety, and well-being of the children and families.

This Oder shall be in effect Monday, March 16, 2020 through Friday, April 10, 2020.



Honorable John B. Sumner