



**FILED**  
MAR 19 2020  
ALEX CALVO, CLERK  
BY *[Signature]*  
DEPUTY SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
JUVENILE DIVISION  
COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

**STANDING ORDER TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING IN-PERSON VISITATION WITH FOSTER CHILDREN DURING THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SHELTER IN PLACE ORDER DUE TO COVID-19**

On March 4, 2020, the Governor of the State of California declared a State of Emergency due to the introduction and spread of the international COVID-19 virus. On March 13, 2020 the President of the United States of America also declared a National Emergency. As of March 17, 2020, the Center for Disease Control reported 4,226 cases and 75 deaths due to COVID-19. As of March 18, 2020, there are 13 known cases of COVID-19 in Santa Cruz County.

As of March 16, 2020, the Santa Cruz Public Health Officer issued an Order applicable to all individuals living in the County of Santa Cruz to Shelter in Place and directing all businesses and governmental agencies to cease non-essential operations within the county, and to prohibit all non-essential gatherings of any numbers of individuals or non-essential travel. Said Order is effective until April 7, 2020, with violations punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both (California Health and Safety Code 120295). The Shelter in Place order has resulted in closure of agencies providing services to dependent children and their families, including visitation services as they are not enumerated essential services or essential businesses.

Welfare and Institutions Code section 361.2 mandates that visitation between children in out-of-home care and their parents must be as frequent as possible, consistent with the well-being of the

1 child. Section 361.2 also outlines the importance of preserving and promoting sibling relationships.  
2 This court and collaborative partners recognize that visitation is vital for health and wellbeing of  
3 children and families. Given the extent of the COVID-19 emergency/pandemic and the Shelter in Place  
4 orders, it is not reasonable to require dependent children, their parents and resource families to  
5 participate in visitation at this time.

6 Balancing the conflict between the legal mandates to support reunification and the  
7 current emergent safety of all children and participants in the dependency system, the court  
8 finds it appropriate and urgent to make the following orders:


- 9  
10 1. Court-ordered visitation between children placed out of home and their parents or  
11 guardians or siblings or others shall be suspended temporarily for the duration of the  
12 Shelter in Place orders.
- 13 2. In order to protect everyone involved as well as the general public, Family Children  
14 Services Department is hereby authorized to substitute computer/cell phone assisted  
15 video conferencing (i.e. Skype, Zoom, FaceTime, WhatsApp) and/or telephonic contact  
16 in place of court ordered in person visitation whenever feasible. Family Children  
17 Services Department is also authorized to delegate supervision of any such  
18 computer/cell phone assisted video conferencing and/or telephonic contact to a  
19 dependent's caregiver or other responsible adult whenever possible, given the staffing  
20 and resource shortage caused by this health emergency. The Family Children Services  
21 Department continues to have discretion to facilitate alternative visitation on a case-  
22 by-case, depending on the best interests of the child.
- 23 3. This order does not prohibit the Family Children Services Department, in appropriate  
24 cases when all parties agree, from authorizing an extended visit (where a child  
25 removed from the home of their parent is allowed to live with the parent(s) under the  
26 expectation that a plan of reunification Family Maintenance would be ordered by the  
27 court once the Sheltering in Place order is lifted) despite the lack of a pending court  
28 date.

1 This order is effective immediately and shall continue until April 8, 2020. This issue shall be  
2 reassessed by the Juvenile Court on April 8, 2020 to determine whether the Sheltering in Place  
3 Order was extended, thereby an extension of this order would be necessary for the safety of  
4 children, their biological families, their resource parents, and service providers.

5  
6 This order is intended to meet the statutory requirement pursuant to Welfare and  
7 Institutions Code Section 19 that protective services are fully provided to dependent children  
8 to ensure that the physical, mental and moral welfare of the children are not threatened by  
9 their present circumstances or environment.

10  
11 DATED:

3/19/2020

12   
DENINE J. GUY  
Judge of the Superior Court

