

COVID-19 Match Guidelines

As this pandemic evolves, we will continue to follow the guidelines and orders of the state and federal government.

Each match must decide together when it is appropriate for their match to resume in-person contact. The timing will vary for our matches based on their needs and considerations.

When deciding if you should have in-person contact, first acknowledge the following:

- Relationships can continue to grow and be meaningful in the absence of in-person contact. We also know that in-person contact is important for connection, mental health, and overall well-being. Whether virtual or in-person, remember that consistent contact is important.
- Please check on your Little for at least 15-minutes weekly if not meeting in person. This could be as simple as sending a meme, emoji, or postcard. Let them know you are thinking of them, and keep sending encouragement and a way to make them smile.
- Any in person contact carries a risk for COVID-19 transmission. A person with no symptoms can be a carrier and infect others. Please follow recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) to help lower risk of transmission. Check back frequently as information and recommendations continue to be revised.
- Deciding whether or not to have in-person contact will be an ongoing personal decision that will change repeatedly depending on updates within the pandemic, contacts with other people, personal wellness or symptoms day by day. This is a decision that will need to be assessed each time when planning an outing.
- Each person needs to make a thoughtful choice about what is the best decision for themselves and their own health. Members of the match need to respect each other's needs and put safety first. Consider ripple effects – who have you been exposed to recently? Will either of you be near someone who is immunocompromised or at heightened risk? If so, consider what is best for their health too.
- Do not pressure each other into having in person contact. Be careful and sensitive in assessing if anyone feels anxious or concerned about safety and wellness. If you need some support around how to have this conversation, contact your Match Support Specialist.
- Part of being a Big is to be a role model. This includes modeling healthy behavior, responsible decision making, self-care, and being a rule-abiding and conscientious community member. It also means modeling ways to cope with frustrating and stressful situations – talking about feelings, finding healthy self-care activities, being open about good days as well as bad days.
- The agency will continue to monitor and follow advice of the CDC and state guidance. Our agency may choose to revise or revoke guidelines around in-person contact as needed.

Protocol for In-Person Contact

1. Each person in the match needs to assess their health directly before each outing: Are you feeling achy? Fever or chills? Fatigued? Cough or tightness in chest? Unusual digestive issues? Unknown rash? Before each outing, all parties should do this self-evaluation and discuss with each other to determine if the outing should occur or be a virtual visit instead.
2. Share with your match if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or had exposure to a large number of people – consider your recent contacts. We need to be open and honest with each other so we can protect each other and work together to make the best informed decision about an outing.
3. When you get together, remind each other about rules for the day. How will we help keep each other healthy? There are many logistics to think through. Make a plan and discuss your plan. Check in throughout your outing.
4. Wear a mask during outings. Refer to the Center for Disease Control & Prevention for further details about mask best practice.
5. Big is responsible for supplying a clean mask for self and Little for each outing. Bring a new mask for youth each time, or Big will take the mask at the end of the outing to launder it – follow CDC guidelines for safe handling and washing. Big must also supply hand sanitizer and anything else needed for hand hygiene or protection. If a match needs help accessing these materials – contact your MSS.
6. Wash or sanitize hands frequently – remind each other during the outing.
7. Maintain at least 6 feet of distance.
8. Riding in the car together can be a challenge with social distancing. You may choose to avoid it all together. If transporting child, use the following: 1) Big and youth wear mask; 2) Consider having windows down or keeping ride short; 3) Youth should sit in backseat; 4) Hand hygiene: Use hand sanitizer directly before car ride and directly after to help reduce germs in car; 5) Big should wipe down car before and after outing.
9. If it seems best to avoid transporting Little, Big should consider outings in the child's neighborhood: walk, bike ride, bringing a ball, sidewalk chalk, or game to use in the yard or nearby park.
10. Outdoor activities are best – view our list for ideas. Consider time of day – morning activities will help beat the heat and the crowds. Consider bathroom needs – where is there access to a restroom? Facilities are locked at some parks, but not all. Consider where you can find shade. Bring plenty of water for hydration. Bring and use sunscreen and insect repellent.



Suggested Supplies for Outings

- Masks for Big and Little
- Hand sanitizer
- Sanitation wipes
- Individually wrapped snacks
- Outdoor fold-up chairs or blanket
- Bottled water
- Materials for your planned activity

Outdoor Activity Ideas

- Explore various neighborhoods and outdoor landmarks
- Walk to get an ice cream or other treat
- Have a picnic at the park
- Throw a baseball or football
- Take a pet for a walk
- Play a game (charades, I Spy, Who Am I, checkers, board game, hopscotch or, dominoes)
- Create a scavenger hunt, do nature bingo, or create a challenge – find and snap photos of as many different shaped leaves as you can. Or find and snap photos of objects that show a range of colors – nature’s rainbow.
- Trash pick-up (or other outdoor service project)
- Fishing
- Do workout together at the park or in a backyard (yoga, squats, burpees, jumps, push-ups, relays, lunges or jump rope)
- Gardening
- Outdoor art project (sidewalk chalk, tie-dye, paint hopeful signs to share with others, coloring or knitting)
- Read aloud
- Backyard jigsaw puzzle (a puzzle mat allows you to roll up and travel with puzzle in progress)
- Make cloth masks for self or others
- Hula hoop
- Roller blade
- Fence art: Use ribbon to weave into chain link fence – various designs and patterns
- Outdoor Lego build competition – sit apart from each other with a timer to build a certain object
- Learn and practice dance moves together
- Learn and practice a new language
- Wash the car
- Build something (bookshelf, brd house or bench)
- Hike
- Walk
- Bike ride