**SAUK COUNTY COURT COMMISSIONER**

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M E M O

TO: All Parties to Family Law Cases in Sauk County

FROM: Leo J. Grill, Family/Judicial Court Commissioner

RE: COVID-19 and Child Custody, Physical Placement and Related Issues and Orders

The current COVID-19 pandemic and the “safer at home” rules recently put into effect in Wisconsin will likely have an impact on child custody and physical placement orders. When addressing this issue with the other parent, **common sense has to rule.**  Parents may need to have an open and honest discussion with the other parent about concerns and come up with a plan. Courts expect parents to work together for the best interests of their children – this is especially true during times of crisis. “Discussion” means an adult, non-threatening, non-judgmental conversation. It does not mean a Facebook post shared with the whole world, nor does it mean a series of one-sided, increasingly hostile text messages back and forth. It means an informed, open conversation, the goal of which is to jointly protect the best interests of your children.

Do not use COVID-19 as a means to engage in questionable parenting habits, drive a wedge between your child and the other parent or unfairly deprive the child time with the other parent out of unjustified fear or spite. Working together, we will all get through this.

If questions arise as to what legal options you may have to exercise, you should contact a private, family law attorney for advice and assistance. The courts are here to conduct hearings in what are truly emergency situations. What constitutes an “emergency” is something it is best to discuss with an attorney.