

To: DCS All Staff

From: Mike Faust, Director

Re: Testing for COVID-19 and Requirements for Monthly DCS Specialist Contact with Children

Date: July 1, 2020

The Department of Child Safety is required to make monthly contact with children in out-of-home care and their caregivers to provide for child safety and well-being. In current practice, the DCS Specialist contacts the child and the caregiver every calendar month through an in-person contact at the caregiver's home.

Given the continued necessity to ensure child safety, and the growing need to practice social distancing for the health and well-being of ourselves and children, the Children's Bureau has issued updated guidelines regarding monthly child contact: During specific time-limited circumstances, such as a declaration of an emergency that prohibits or strongly discourages person-to-person contact for public health reasons, the Department may waive the in-person requirement of the monthly contact and instead accomplish this through use of videoconferencing.

Effective immediately, and lasting until September 30, 2020:

When notified that any individual in the home or facility where a child in out of home care resides has been tested for COVID-19 and is awaiting results, the DCS Specialist shall delay in-person contact with the child until after receipt of the test results.

- If there is concern that delaying in-person contact may result in missed monthly contact, the DCS Specialist and Program Supervisor notify the Program Manager and request virtual monthly contact with the child and caregiver.
- Efforts should be made to see the child in-person during the current calendar month following the receipt of negative result(s) for the individual(s) tested.

DCS Specialists shall request to conduct virtual visitation for a monthly in-person child contact when any individual living in the home or facility where the child resides has tested positive for COVID-19.

- Upon notification that an individual in the home or facility has tested positive, the DCS Specialist and the Program Supervisor notify the Program Manger and request virtual monthly contact with the child and caregiver.
- The DCS Specialist provides notification of a child in out of home care's positive test to CMDP by emailing CMDPcovid19@azdcs.gov.

- In situations where positive test results have been confirmed, Program Managers should approve virtual visitation for 10 days AND until 24 hours have passed since the following symptoms have resolved for all members of the household, whichever occurs later: fever, chills, rigors (chills with shaking) and body/muscle aches, without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (including cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, sore throat and loss of taste or smell).

Upon approval by the Program Manager:

- The Specialist will make the required monthly contacts with children and their caregivers using virtual technology (video conferencing). If video conferencing is not available for one or both parties, the Department will make the required contacts by telephone. The use of virtual contacts does not change the Department's duty to ensure child safety; the child must still be closely assessed.
- The DCS Specialist shall contact the child's caregiver to arrange the virtual contact to occur through Department provided technology. Acceptable technology for use is currently available on the DCS Specialist's laptop, tablet, or Department issued telephone: Microsoft Teams and Google Duo.
- If a concern about child safety arises during a monthly contact, or the child cannot be reached via virtual technology, or the child is non-verbal and video conferencing is not available, the decision of whether the child must be seen in-person will be determined through a Supervision Conference with the Program Manager.

Documentation of the contact using virtual technology shall be entered into case notes:

- Follow the Child and Caregiver Visitation Note Outline to document all contacts with the child and caregiver, using the Case Notes window designated as Child Contact type.
- Select the "In Person" contact type radio button.
- If the virtual visit occurs while the child is in the caregiver's home, select "In Placement Contact."
- Highlight the names of all parties, including the DCS Specialist, in the "Contact With" list on the Case Notes window.
- Begin the note with the following statement, "This contact was completed using virtual technology as a result of an in-person waiver during a declared public health emergency to protect against COVID-19."

This directive is effective July 1, 2020, and replaces any prior directive or policy on this matter until September 30, 2020 or until further notice is provided.

Sincerely,



Mike Faust
Director