

**Child Welfare Services
Foster Family Agencies
Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs
Frequently Asked Questions
Related to COVID-19**

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Are there any updates on the court order visitation?

Per Court Order dated 03/25/20: The court has extended the suspension of in-person visits between parents and children/youth to April 17, 2020. This order supersedes any other visitation order made on any case. All efforts should be made to communicate and provide information to all parties in order to address concerns timely that will occur due to the lack of in-person visitation. Staff should assist with arranging virtual visits via FaceTime, Skype, Google Duo or other allowable platforms. Social workers have the discretion to allow in-person visitation between children/youth and their parents/guardians, but the decision to allow in-person visitation should be carefully considered. The social worker must assess the needs and safety of the child, caregiver, and parent and determine that visitation would not be detrimental to the safety or health of any person involved. Staff should consult with their supervisor and manager prior to allowing in-person visitation. If an in-person visitation is assessed to be safe and appropriate, the social worker will document this decision in CWS/CMS and help to arrange this visit through communication with both the birth and resources parents. Prior to any in-person visits, the resource parent should also be asking the screening questions related to COVID-19:

- Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing?
- In the last 14 days, have you come into close contact with someone who is known to have COVID-19?
- In the last 14 days, have you traveled to an area with widespread, ongoing COVID-19 transmission? The visit should not occur if any member of the visit arrives with symptoms and should be stopped if anyone shows symptoms during the visit.

The social worker must also evaluate, on a case-by-case basis, whether children may remain on an extended visit with their parent/guardian effective immediately through 5:00 pm on April 17, 2020. During this time, social workers do not need concurrence from counsel; however, are required to give two working days' notice by email to the child's attorney by using the Children's Legal Services (CLS) Change of Placement in-box. Workers should review cases that were already having overnight visits and are close to reunification to determine if an extended visit or 60-day trial visit may be appropriate.

Are there extensions for submitting any reports (State and Local)?

SIRs still need to be submitted within the normal mandated timeframes. Submitting your monthly caseload report on the usual schedule will allow you to be paid on time. At this time, we will be waiving the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) requirement for the January – March 2020 quarter. If there are other reports you would like to discuss, please contact your COR.

There was a request for clarification on how to elevate items to the CORs after hours and weekends

During this crisis, CORs are checking E-mail regularly seven days a week. You can reach them on their cell phone as well.

- Susan Hayes (619) 708-2924
- Lyn Worthington (858) 829-1965
- Jessie Furrer (858) 705-4755

What Telehealth/BHS support exists for youth that require therapy?

BHS providers are still operating and providing the services. Please contact Seth Williams at County Behavioral Health at 619-584-3042.

<http://www.nationalparenthelpline.org/find-support/state-resources/california-resources>

Are signatures still required for Release of Information?

Whenever a Release of Information (ROI) is needed for service delivery, CWS practice is to ask the client to sign the release. With the COVID-19 crisis, staff and county contractors are still encouraged to obtain a written ROI, if possible. However, for the duration of the local health emergency verbal ROIs are acceptable. **NOTE:** If a verbal ROI is received, document in the client's case why the written consent was not feasible.

What guidance do you have if a child/youth is sick or injured not related to COVID-19?

Contractors need to continue to follow the Special Incident Report (SIR) requirements as stated in the County of San Diego contract, Statement of Work (SOW) Section 8.1.3, which requires the Contractor to notify the Placing Agency Representative (PAR) within one (1) business day and provide a written to report both the PAR and IEU within seven (7) calendar days.

For injuries that are severe and require immediate medical attention, the child needs to be seen right away. For all other injuries, the resource parent/facility staff needs to call the child's regular primary care physician to consult as to whether or not the child needs to be seen. Rady Children's Hospital remains open and critical services such as the Chadwick Center remain open. There are medical and forensic interview staff on site every weekday who continue to see patients. The mental health team continues to see children and families both in person and by tele-mental health platforms.

What is the procedure for an FFA/GH/STRTP to follow if COVID-19 is detected? What needs to be reported to the County?

Notify the County and CCL if a youth, staff member or resource parent has tested positive for COVID-19, is waiting for test results or has been asked to be quarantined or if they have been exposed to anyone who has tested positive, if waiting for test results or has been asked to be quarantined. Call Public Health to notify them and follow their guidance for your specific situation. Public Health can be reached through calling 211. Contractors should continue to follow the Special Incident Report (SIR) requirements as stated in the County of San Diego contract, Statement of Work (SOW) Section 8.1.3, which requires the Contractor to notify the Placing Agency Representative (PAR) within one (1) business day and provide a written to report both the PAR and IEU within seven (7) calendar days.

For Procedure in case of illness: Please review PIN 20-04, which provides detailed instructions under various scenarios.

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/CCL/Childrens-Residential-Licensing/2020%20PINs/PIN%2020-04-CRP.pdf>

Can we have flexibility for the TB requirements when hiring new staff?

TB testing requirements have temporarily changed to enable new staff to work immediately. Although the requirement is temporarily waived, all licensees shall conduct a TB screening using the TB Risk Assessment Questionnaire prior to beginning employment. The licensee shall ensure that the TB requirement for new staff is met as soon as possible. Please PIN 20-04 for any policy documentation changes, posting requirements and expiration dates of the waiver.

After transport and supervise visits, what are the protocols followed for the sanitizing car seats, etc...between visits?

Vehicles will be cleaned and disinfected frequently. Car seats will be cleaned following manufacturer's instructions as harsh chemicals could damage the car seat, which means it might not protect a child in a crash.

If a Resource Family or STRTP refuses to do court ordered visits, will CWS remove the child from their home?

We continue to focus on doing what is in the best interest of the child. Social workers should be discussing visitation plans with the caregiver and considering the health and safety of the child/youth, parent and caregiver when making a determination as to whether or not in-person visitation should occur. The FFA/ST RTP needs to communicate with the placing worker about alternate visitation plans and current court orders regarding visitation. FFAs and STRTPs should assist with arranging virtual visits. It is expected that virtual visits occur either in addition to, or in lieu of, in-person visitation based on the social worker's assessment. Any removals or change of placement will be at the discretion of the placing worker, after assessment of the needs and identification of alternate plans. Every effort should be made to ensure health and safety of parents, children/youth, and caregivers while maintaining reunification efforts.

Does CWS have a plan when/if Resource Families or STRTPs give notice out of fear of being exposed to COVID-19 doing mandated visitation?

The FFA/ST RTP needs to follow existing procedures including participation in a CFT meeting and assist in finding available respite. The placing social worker should be having discussions with caregivers about visitation and working together to develop a plan. If notice is still given, the placing agency social worker will proceed and assist with placement maintenance and/or alternate placement procurement.

Is there a Public Health contact and is it 24/7?

Public Health can be reached through calling 211 San Diego.

What is the procedure if a Resource Family member becomes sick with COVID-19 and the child in their care is not sick?

When a caregiver has been exposed to, presents symptoms of, or tests positive for, COVID-19, the caseworker will ensure that the caregiver has support in caring for the child and in effectively self-isolating, (refer to ACL 20-33). Caregiver exposure or illness is not in and of itself reason for moving a child. When a health professional has recommended that a child or caregiver should be isolated or quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, the county or Foster Family Agency, as applicable, should work with the caregiver to develop an emergency plan to meet practical needs such as food delivery, medication delivery, telehealth consultations, and mental health services. If the child is in a facility, the county should assist the residential care provider with their emergency plan to meet practical needs, as necessary. The County does have resources to assist with isolation/quarantine. FFAs and STRTPs should follow all noticing requirements so that the County can assist with identifying isolation/quarantine resources if that is needed.

Should a Resource Family have an underlying health condition that puts them at greater risk, will CWS provide transport and visitation support with the birth parents?

Yes, CWS will assist with transportation and visitation as needed. The FFA and/or Resource Parent(s) need to coordinate with the youth's Placing Agency Representative (PAR) and discuss it in a Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting. The PAR can assist in arranging other options.

PARKING LOT ~ these questions are being researched

Do the STRTPs (and FFAs) have flexibility on the County's drug test requirement for hiring staff?

Is there additional funding for FFAs and STRTPs for increased expenses during COVID-19?