

INFORMATION, SUPPORT AND RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

During this crisis, caregivers are our first line of support to our foster youth. Caregivers will be the first to witness and respond to each of our children's physical, emotional and safety concerns. These caregivers may need additional supports ranging from the tangible (toilet paper) to the intangible (stabilizing a child in crisis). Caseworkers should ensure they are connecting families to any of the supports and resources available within their social services agency and community. Below are additional resources that may provide support for caregivers:

Health and behavioral health

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has issued guidance clarifying the ability for most services to be provided via telephone AND telehealth visits, including mental health assessments. Substance Use Disorder (SUD) initial assessments for DMC-ODS can be done by telehealth or in-person, with subsequent services by telehealth or telephone. See DHCS Information Notice 20-009 for more detail. Visit the DHCS website periodically as guidance and information is being updated as it becomes available. Child Welfare and Probation Departments are encouraged to communicate closely with their County Behavioral Health to coordinate continued access to these services.

Education

It is currently anticipated that schools may remain closed for a significant period of time. Caseworkers should be working with caregivers to ensure that youth in their care are receiving distance learning plans. Caregivers are encouraged to help support foster youth learning and engaging in academic and creative activities during this time and counties should help caregivers to access at-home learning options.

Counties may also contact the county's Foster Youth Services Coordinator for assistance: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/fy/contacts.asp>

The California School Directory can assist caregivers and county child welfare agencies or probation departments to locate a child's school district for the purpose of identifying which school sites may be distributing packaged meals, finding information about distance learning efforts for local schools, and coordinating special education needs of children.

Here is a link to the California MAP to Inclusion and Belonging Newsletter, Making Access Possible March 2020. Coronavirus (COVID-19): Taking Care of the Children - Six Sets of Resources.

Medication maintenance for youth:

It will be important for caseworkers and public health nurses to talk with caregivers about prescription medications for the youth in their care. Circumstances may arise which will prevent youth from seeing their doctor and/or psychiatrist on a timely basis, and it may be necessary to arrange for additional medication and/or telehealth appointments to bridge any gaps between appointments. Medi-Cal will allow up to a 100-day supply of medications to be dispensed at one time. This does not apply, however, to opiate medications. Caregivers should contact the doctor if the youth's supply is running low to avoid an emergency arising. In some instances, early refill warnings can also be overridden at the point of sale, allowing patients to get their refill before the previous supply has run out, if medically necessary. For more information go to:

http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/newsroom/newsroom_30366.asp

There are many issues that can arise during this time. Caregivers and families should be supported to reach out to counties and receive timely responses from their county caseworkers and their FFA social workers (when applicable). Caregivers with questions and concerns may also reach out to the Foster Caregiver Policy and Support Unit at (916) 651-7465 and kinship.care@DSS.ca.gov or by contacting the RFA inbox at RFA@DSS.ca.gov.

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, contact the Division at (916) 657-2614 or at CFSD@dss.ca.gov.

OTHER RESOURCES

- Resources for Supporting Children's Emotional Needs During the COVID-19 Epidemic: <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/resources-for-supporting-childrens-emotional-well-being-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>
- When you can't be there in person: <https://haralambie.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/When-You-Cant-Be-There-in-Person.pdf>
- The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse – Parents Anonymous <https://www.cebc4cw.org/program/parents-anonymous/>
- Counties Participating in Courtesy Supervision <https://www.cwda.org/county-tools/counties-participating-courtesy-supervision>.
- Emergency Plan – Youth Law Center

https://ylc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Emergency-Plan-with-TAY-in-Foster-Care_YLC.pdf

- Build a Teen Stress Management Plan
<https://parentandteen.com/teen-stress-management-plan/>
- Center for Parent & Teen Communication
<https://parentandteen.com/>
- Find AA Meetings in California
<https://alcoholicsanonymous.com/aa-meetings/california/>
- California NA Meetings
<https://www.narcotics.com/na-meetings/california/>

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (CFSR) PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

CDSS is in contact with the federal ACF regarding the impacts to our Program Improvement Plan and ongoing CFSR Case Reviews and will provide any updates as they become available.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

GREGORY E. ROSE
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division