



DCFS Response to COVID-19 *Frequently Asked Questions*

What is DCFS Doing in Response to COVID-19?

DCFS leadership is working closely with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and health officials to address Novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19 concerns. We recognize that this is a challenging time for the community and that many are fearful or anxious. DCFS is working to ensure the safety of our staff and the families we serve through a variety of measures and will continue in its child protection work and provide essential services to children and families.

DCFS is currently following its Emergency Operations Plan at level red. This indicates an increased need for resources and allows the Department to respond to this crisis while maintaining minimum operations. Under the Emergency Operations Plan, DCFS is temporarily postponing in-person meetings, trainings, gatherings, and special events to the extent possible.

Additionally, DCFS has restricted travel out of state for all Department staff and are coordinating out-of-state home visits with other jurisdictions. In consultation with County and State officials, DCFS is also temporarily suspending some policies that do not impact critical child safety work.

Can I still visit a DCFS office during this time?

Kathryn Barger, Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has ordered all Los Angeles County facilities closed to the public effective immediately. DCFS offices will remain open and accessible to employees only during this time. If parents, youth, or caregivers have questions, they should first contact their social worker or the main line of the DCFS Regional Office they are trying to reach.

How can I receive updated information?

DCFS has increased the frequency of communications with staff, parents, youth, caregivers, and service providers to provide timely information. Although information is evolving quickly, DCFS continues to monitor developments and will share updates as they become available on the [DCFS website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) accounts. Please check these channels regularly for updates.

Will a DCFS social worker still visit my home during this time?

The Administration for Children and Families (federal government) has communicated to the California Department of Social Services that it is not allowing for exceptions or deviations to the state requirement for at least monthly visits to children in foster care.



Therefore, DCFS social workers will continue to conduct monthly home visits, but may call ahead to conduct a health pre-screening of those in the home. If someone in your home is feeling ill or feeling flu-like symptoms ahead of a visit, please contact your social worker.

How can I protect myself from COVID-19?

Below are simple precautions to stay safe and healthy during this time:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water after interacting with a child or family member or after touching surfaces in a family's home;
 - Teach children to sing a song while scrubbing hands with soap for 20 seconds - like the ABC or Happy Birthday songs.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth, and ears with unwashed hands;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks;
- Practice "social distancing" by limiting the time you spend in public. Avoid large groups of people and try to maintain distance from others when you do go out.

How do I keep them engaged at home while school is out?

DCFS is working with local school districts and community partners to help accommodate caregiver needs or connect you with additional resources for the children in your care.

We understand that staying home with children for the next several weeks while practicing social distancing may be tough. We have assembled a list of community-based resources available:

- The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) will open 60 "grab-and-go" food centers for school families, beginning Wednesday, March 18, 2020. Each child can take home two nutritious meals. Centers will be open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. To find the center nearest you: [click here](#). Check your local school district for additional resources.
- The Los Angeles County Library provides various digital resources you can access 24/7, no matter where you are. With a library card number and PIN - you can access:



- Read [eBooks](#) and listen to [audiobooks](#) on OverDrive or Libby.
 - Stream [movies and TV shows](#) on Kanopy and Hoopla.
 - Check out [digital magazines](#) via RBDigital.
 - Stream [music](#) on Freegal.
 - [TumbleBook Library](#) is an online collection of animated and talking picture books.
 - [Brainfuse](#) provides kids and learners of all ages with one-on-one homework help and tutoring from 1:00 – 10 :00 p.m. every day.
- Sign up for [ReadyRosie](#) to get texts or emails with ideas for family engagement tips and early learning opportunities.
 - Educational content will stream on the [PBS SoCal](#) and [KCET](#) websites, on the free KCET app – available on Roku and Apple TV – and on the PBS Video app, also available on Roku, Apple TV as well as Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Google Play and YouTube.
 - Sign up for a [weekly newsletter](#) from PBS Kids with ideas for activities and tips you can use to help children play and learn at home.

For more Los Angeles County resources for children, families, and schools, [click here](#).

What if I think my foster child has COVID-19?

If the foster child in your home shows signs of illness, keep them away from others and inform the child's social worker to coordinate a consultation with a Medical Hub clinician. Please remember the "prudent parenting" standards you learned in your caregiver training - that will help you make sensible and reasonable parenting decisions. For more information on prudent parenting standards, [click here](#).

I am a foster youth and my caregiver is denying visits with my family due to COVID-19. What do I do?

Despite the current public health situation, you still are entitled to your rights as a foster youth including access to medical care; right to contact family members, your county social worker, attorney, CASA or other advocate; and right to education and social contacts. Read more about Foster Youth Rights at <https://dcfs.lacounty.gov/youth/know-your-rights/>.

As of March 16, 2020, DCFS Offices are closed to the public and therefore, unable to host parent-child visitation at this time. Despite DCFS office closures, family visitations should still occur using "social distancing" recommendation of 6 feet. However, if someone in your home is feeling ill or showing flu-like symptoms ahead of a visit, please contact your social worker to determine if the visit should be in-person, by telephone, or video conference, e.g., FaceTime or Skype.

To help keep yourself safe and healthy during this time, remember to practice good hygiene including



washing hands for 20 seconds, avoiding large gatherings, and covering your mouth with a tissue when you sneeze.

Will DCFS still host resource parent trainings during this time?

DCFS has postponed all in-person trainings for resource parents and caregivers. For more information, please call your social worker, the Resource Family Approval (RFA) warm line at (877) 323-7165 or visit <https://dcfs.lacounty.gov/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/>.

I am a non-minor dependent youth and do not have access to technology to complete my coursework - Can DCFS help me?

If you are a non-minor dependent youth that is in college and in-person classes were cancelled or moved online, you may be eligible for free high-speed data hotspots, headsets, and laptops from iFoster. For more information, call iFoster at 1 (855) 936-7837 or email phone@iFoster.org.

I am a parent whose child is in foster care. Can I still have visitations with my child?

Although DCFS offices are unable to host parent-child visitations due to the mandatory closure of all County facilities to the public, family visitations should still carry on.

However, if someone in your home is feeling ill or showing flu-like symptoms ahead of a visit, please contact your social worker to determine if the visit should be in-person, by telephone, or video conference, e.g., FaceTime or Skype.

Do I need to attend my upcoming Dependency Court hearing?

Starting March 17, 2020, all Los Angeles County courtrooms, including Dependency Court, will be closed for three (3) days. The Los Angeles Superior Court will reopen on Friday, March 20, 2020, for the limited purpose of hearing or handing essential or emergency matters, in Criminal, Civil, Probate, Family Law and Dependency/Juvenile cases. Call your attorney if you have any questions. Visit the www.lacourt.org for latest updates.

###