



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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****PRESS RELEASE****

DCFS CONTINUES IN-PERSON VISITS WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Los Angeles – August 10, 2020 - The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) reiterated today that, contrary to some news reports, child welfare social workers have continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to make face-to-face contact with children and families in their homes. The department also announced today that, during the month of June, 96 percent of all children in DCFS cases were seen, with 85.7 percent of those visits taking place in person. As a part of the overall effort, visits with children in cases at high risk for future referral for maltreatment have been given top priority for face-to-face visits.

While all county offices have been closed to the public since March at the direction of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, including DCFS' 20 regional offices, social workers have remained accessible and responsive. DCFS social workers never ceased to make in-person visits to assess for child safety when investigating child abuse referrals, and it should be noted that at the outset of the pandemic, federal, state, and local orders prompted the department to modify monthly contact practices to include virtual visitation in a small subset of cases. However, state policy changed in last month to require resumption of face-to-face visits, with very limited exceptions effective July 1st.

"Our frontline staff has remained in the field and fully committed to ensuring the safety and the wellbeing of the children and families under our care," Director Bobby D. Cagle said. "I am deeply grateful to our social workers who have never stopped performing the essential duties required by our profession. Even at the outset of this public health crisis, when personal protective equipment was difficult to come by, most of our staff set their personal health concerns aside to continue performing vital child safety work."



Despite this temporary change in practice – which was intended to protect the health and safety of children and families as well as social workers – children under DCFS supervision, remained in regular communication by way of face-to-face contacts and virtual visits. In June, in addition to the 85.7 percent of children who received an in-person visit, 9 percent were seen via video contact, and 1.3 percent were monitored by phone, according to the department.

Like all other state child welfare agencies, DCFS is subject to federal, state, and local directives pertaining to its operations. DCFS vigorously refutes any claims that its offices have remained closed or its caseworkers homebound as a result of undue political influence from external sources.

The department has a robust and ongoing public information campaign encouraging families to seek prevention and aftercare services and, in instances where neglect or abuse is suspected, urging residents to call the Child Protection Hotline at 800-540-4000.

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About the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) promotes child safety and well-being by partnering with communities to strengthen families, keeping children at home whenever possible, and connecting them with stable, loving homes in times of need. As the largest child protective services agency in the nation, DCFS is responsible for ensuring the safety of more than two million children across 88 diverse cities in Los Angeles County. Established in 1984 to keep children safe and support families in crisis, it is one of the 35 Los Angeles County Departments governed by the five-member Board of Supervisors with nearly 9,000 staff across 20 regional offices, specialized bureaus, and administration that cover a broad array of services and programs. The department is led by Director Bobby D. Cagle - a former foster child and longtime social worker. For more information, visit <http://dcfs.lacounty.gov>.