

COVID-19 RESOURCE GUIDE

CHILDREN’S RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel virus that has been spreading worldwide. Due to the fluidity of the situation, it is important to stay informed. We are gaining more understanding of COVID-19’s patterns, clinical course, and other factors, including potential for human immunity, as time progresses. The situation is changing daily. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is monitoring COVID-19, conducting testing with local and federal partners, and providing guidance and resources to prevent, detect and respond to the occurrence of COVID-19 cases in California.

At this time, community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring in California. Facilities and homes have been preparing for possible impacts of COVID-19 and taking precautions to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 as well as other infectious diseases, including influenza and gastroenteritis.

This guide includes best practice suggestions. This guide should not be used as a substitute for knowing and understanding the statutory, regulatory, and other requirements for licensure, or as the only tool licensees use to evaluate and measure their practices and policies. Given the evolving nature of the COVID-19 situation, licensees should refer to the resources listed below for the most up to date information.

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RESOURCES

The websites below are providing the most current and up to date information during this virus outbreak. Check them regularly.

- [Contact information](#) for your local public health department
- [CDSS website](#)
- [CDPH website](#)
- [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\) website](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#)
- [The Community Care Licensing Division \(CCLD\) website](#) provides guidance and information on COVID-19 mitigation protocols, best practices, and statewide waivers for the Children’s Residential Program. Check this website frequently for the latest PINs and waiver information.
- The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) has a page on [How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus](#)

FACILITIES & HOMES

Prevention

- Limit entry into the building to one or two main entrances.
- Designate one room for visitation and thoroughly disinfect after each meeting.
- Follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and [disinfecting community facilities](#) or cleaning and [disinfecting homes](#).

Signage

- [Post signage at each entrance](#) regarding the limitation of visitors and prevention measures.
- [Post signage in bathrooms and kitchen](#) with reminders about prevention hygiene measures.

Supplies

- Do daily checks to make sure all sinks have soap, paper towels, and a non-touch trash can.
- Make sure there are tissues and hand sanitizer for all rooms throughout the home or facility, including bedrooms and in all common areas.
- Ensure adequate cleaning supplies for enhanced cleaning and disinfection.
- Ensure an adequate food supply is on hand in order to limit trips to the grocery store, and arrange for children to access the school food program if needed. For large facilities, this [guidance](#) may be helpful in arranging for the purchase and pickup of larger quantities of food.

STAFF

- Review (and modify, if needed) sick leave policies to support employees who need to stay at home due to illness.
- Instruct staff to self-monitor for respiratory infection symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath) and conduct screening of staff before the start of each shift for symptoms. Do this before staff interact with children.
- Staff with any respiratory infection symptoms should not be at work.
- Follow the CDC and/or local health department guidelines for returning to work as the guidance may change frequently.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Education

- Teach children and youth about proper [hand washing](#) and covering their mouths and nose with a flexed elbow or tissue when [coughing or sneezing](#), and the importance of keeping at least six feet away from other people (no hugging or shaking hands). Throw away tissue after use.
- Ensure children and youth have access to the technology required for [distance learning](#), including internet access and electronic devices needed to attend online school and complete their schoolwork. Access resources and instructions through the [school district](#). Additional information can also be found at [covid19.ca.gov/education](https://www.covid19.ca.gov/education).
- Technology used for distance learning or alternative methods of communication, such as handheld devices and laptops, may need to be used by multiple youth. Clean and disinfect these after each use to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Follow CDC guidance on [cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces](#).

Prevention

- Ensure children/youth follow state and local government public health guidance, orders and social distancing guidelines.
- If children or youth leave the home for an essential service or activity provide pocket hand sanitizer if available.

- When children or youth return, ensure they wash their hands.
- Establish screening protocols for youth returning from being absent without leave. [ACL 20-33](#) provides screening and placement preservation guidance.

Health Monitoring

- Ensure all children/youth have an adequate supply of necessary medications, as detailed in [PIN 20-06-CRP](#).
- Regularly check children/youth for symptoms of a respiratory infection (cough, fever, shortness of breath).
- If a child or youth has known exposure to COVID-19, contact their health care provider for instructions on whether to isolate the child in their own room. If yes, use the isolation practices noted below.
- If a child has symptoms or has tested positive but is otherwise normal (alert, no shortness of breath, no pressure or pain in chest, etc.), put the child/youth in a single-person room with the door closed (if possible) and provide them with their own bathroom (if possible).
 - This may be implemented only as needed to isolate or quarantine a child/youth exhibiting symptoms of, or has tested positive for, COVID-19 **AND** arrangements for appropriate activities have been provided for the child/youth as required in [PIN 20-04-CRP](#).
 - If flexibility allows, move a non-symptomatic child/youth that shares a bedroom with the symptomatic child/youth to a common area such as a den if needed for isolation.
 - Post signs limiting entry into the room and contact their physician immediately for instructions.
- If a child has symptoms of a respiratory infection that need medical evaluation or care, call their health care provider, family member, case manager, and authorized representative immediately. The authorized representatives for all other youth in the facility must also be contacted.
- Any confirmed cases of COVID-19 **MUST** be reported to the local health department and your local Children's Residential Regional Office representative immediately. If after regular business hours, please leave a message and someone will respond.
- Ensure the emergency contact information for all responsible parties and family members are current.

Activities

- Cancel or postpone group activities, including with other families or friends, group external planned activities, or social activities.
- NO group trips outside the home, unless necessary.
- Provide reading materials, cards, puzzles or other forms of entertainment for children and youth to keep busy and engaged.
- Rotate through toys and games so they don't get bored of them. Clean toys and games following CDC guidance on [cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces](#).
- Provide an avenue for children and youth to get exercise and/or expend energy in age appropriate ways.
- Implement staggered outdoor or group activities to limit the number of children who are together as much as possible and that complies with [CDC social distancing guidelines](#).

VISITING

- Non-essential visitors should be limited. This does not include 1) special circumstances such as first responders or necessary health care workers, 2) in-person visits mandated by a court order or federal law, 3) Licensing Program Analysts, Department of Public Health Surveyors, or visitations that fall under the Lanterman Petris Short Act, or 4) Social workers and probation officers of children in the facility.
- Family connections that are essential to the wellbeing of the child should be maintained consistent with screening protocols and social distancing recommendations.
- Notify children's loved ones and authorized representatives about visitor rules that apply during the Covid-19 emergency.
- Communicate with children's loved ones and representatives to provide regular updates. This should include a reliable way for them to communicate with you to ask questions. (See [PIN 20-04-CRP](#) for more on communication plans)
- Teach children and youth and their loved ones how to use smartphones and other devices (computers or tablets) to communicate by video or phone.
- Require anyone who enters the facility to immediately wash their hands upon entrance and encourage them to also wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer throughout their time in the facility.
- Visitors should be screened prior to entry and should 1) not be allowed if they have symptoms, 2) stay in a designated room for the duration of the visit (the room should be disinfected when they leave), and 3) wear a facemask.
- Limit any workmen external workers or vendors unless they are needed to keep operations running and ensure needs are met, and wherever possible take precautions (for example have deliveries dropped off outside the building).
- It is recommended that FFA Social Workers increase frequency of communication, such as phone calls, video calls, and texting, with certified and approved families as necessary in order to offer support during this time.
- In lieu of in-person visits, providers should make arrangements for alternate means of communication and social interactions, such as phone calls, video calls, texting, social media and other online communications.
 - Facilities should accommodate the use of video conferencing, teleconferencing, or other technology to support and actively participate in engaging with others remotely.