

July 9, 2020

Dear Kinship, Foster and Congregate Caregivers,

My level of gratitude grows daily for the commitment, compassion and love that you display every day towards children. No matter how many times we have called upon the foster families, kinship families and congregate care providers you have continually met the needs of children in amazing ways.

Just yesterday, when informed of the placement needs of small children at the Welcome Center, our foster families quickly came together to fill the immediate need. Some social media posts were shared with me yesterday that so greatly touched me. I cannot thank you enough for the rapid response to these children in need and helping remind me of the great work that happens when we come together as a community.

As our partners in caring for foster children and to acknowledge concerns that have been received, we feel appropriate to share that as of this morning, there have been a total of 99 children out of the 14,200 youth in care who have tested positive for COVID-19 since the pandemic has begun. 59 of those youth have since recovered and thankfully no children or young people have had any significant complications as a result of the virus. The vast majority of positive children have resided in a congregate care or group settings.

This week the American Academy of Pediatrics shared with its members, "We also understand that COVID-19 does not seem to be impacting children nearly as severely as other respiratory illnesses. They tend to get infected less, suffer less extreme symptoms and are less likely to transmit the virus to others". For those who serve children, this is very encouraging especially as we seek guidance to decisions we make like returning to the classroom, supporting services and visitation, and evaluate caregiver placement options.

The Department has received requests to test all children entering care for COVID-19, prior to placement. This notion has been explored several times since March and concluded that unless a child is symptomatic or has been in contact with a known COVID-19 positive person that testing should not occur. This decision has been made in consultation with public health, CMDP medical team and is consistent with CDC guidelines. We can share that significant energy and effort is invested daily into contact tracing efforts for children in care and DCS staff.

I share all of this with you today to show my sincere gratitude to you as our partners and our community. My desire is to continue working together and celebrate the positive stories and good that is happening during a very challenging time. Knowing that children in need were placed with families yesterday due to your quick response is a moment that should be celebrated.

Thank you for all you do,



Mike Faust
Director