

December 11, 2020

Dear Kinship, Foster and Congregate Caregivers,

Looking back to when 2020 started, all of our hope, plans, and invigoration for the New Year, I do not believe any of us could have imagined what was in store. Now as we reflect on the year behind us, it is important to focus on what we have learned, the needs of our communities, and our partnerships to give hope for a brighter future for our children and families.

In 2020, we as a community have helped support 4,393 children reunify with their families. We have seen 2,464 children achieve permanency through adoption and 790 through guardianship. All of this is in addition to 783 young people (18-21), signing up to be supported through our extended foster care program. I have been inspired by each of you and the outpouring of support and partnership to serve children and families, so that they can achieve their desired goals while ensuring that children are safely cared for.

There have been and continue to be challenges that we need to overcome together. As the COVID-19 numbers have risen in our communities, we have continually reviewed our guidance and directives to ensure proper precautions are taken while engaging in services. The guidelines can be found here:

[COVID-19 Parenting Time/Visitation Guide](#)  
[COVID-19 Child Contacts Guide](#)

We continue to update all communications at <https://dcs.az.gov/covid19>. As the pandemic lingers, these efforts will continue and as new information becomes available from public health officials adjustments will be made. Implementation of mitigation steps while serving children and families has not been easy, but thanks to all caregivers, providers and frontline staff thousands of children have found permanency this year. For this I am forever grateful to all those who serve.

Our Chief Medical Office in CMDP is closely monitoring information on COVID-19 vaccinations for children. At this time, COVID-19 vaccinations will not be available to children until at least the summer of 2021. As a reminder, though, it is critical that children in care continue to receive their scheduled vaccinations and wellness checkups.

If you are in need of support with COVID-19 testing or resources please reach out the Warmline at 1-877-543-7633 option 3, they can connect you to the right place.

I have so much gratitude and am continually humbled to be serve along with you during this year. Your compassion, advocacy, and kindness continues to give me hope for the years to come. I wish you and your families a happy holiday season.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Faust". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Mike Faust  
Director

*Safety · Accountability · Change · Family · Engagement · Compassion · Teaming · Advocacy*