

April 29, 2020

Dear Kinship, Foster and Congregate Caregivers,

Hope this message finds you and your families well. I cannot express my appreciation for your loving support of Arizona's most vulnerable children and I am continually thankful for all you do.

I wanted to update all of you with the Department's plans regarding its administrative directives regarding Virtual Parenting Time and Virtual Child Contacts.

Although there has been some easing of the physical distancing orders in our communities, the relaxing of the public health guidelines are not yet to an extent that permits a full return to regular practices. As such, the Department has extended its administrative order for Virtual Child Contact (DCS Specialist visit with the child in the home of the caregiver) until May 15, 2020. Following the expiration of this directive, Specialists will once again be visiting children in their placements. Prior to that date, additional communication will be provided regarding scheduling contacts as well as health precautions and use of Personal Protective Equipment that DCS staff will adhere to.

Regarding the directive permitting Virtual Parenting Time, the Department has extended this through May 29, 2020. We know that supporting virtual visitation has been a significant shift but we are so grateful for everyone's support of this effort. The shared parenting practices implemented over the past 6 weeks has truly promoted the supportive relationships we are seeking. Returning to regular visitation practices requires significant planning and some transitionary time. Although still early in the planning process, the Department intends to begin transitioning back to regular visitation the week prior to the expiration of this directive.

Just a reminder, if you are facing barriers with any basic needs, please let us know by contacting the Department at Volunteer@azdcs.gov or calling the Warmline at 1-877-543-7633 Option 3. We will do everything in our power to help our community through this difficult time.

I cannot thank you enough for all you do. The commitment and compassion to supporting children and families, although ever present, has been magnified during this public health crisis.

Thank you and be safe.

Mike Faust
Director