

April 3, 2020

Dear Kinship, Foster and Congregate Caregivers,

I want to start by again thanking each and every one of you for the love and care you provide for the children in foster care. Without your commitment and care none of this would be possible.

With the news this week of school closures for the remainder of the year, transition to virtual learning and the executive order to Stay Home, Stay Healthy and Stay Connected we have all been trying to mentally, emotionally and practically process all these changes. The one thing that remains constant in all of this is that our community needs one another's support. We all need to have patience and compassion in this challenging time. We need to work together to help support with tangible resources, services and often our support to care for vulnerable children.

Over the past week, I have been witness to more social good and supportive actions than ever before. I feel blessed to have our DCS family be part of the network of Non-Profit Qualified Foster Care Organizations, service providers, Foster & Adoptive Support licensing agencies, group home providers and countless private and public organizations doing everything in their control to support those in need.

In concert with the Governor's executive order to Stay Home, Stay Healthy, Stay Connected virtual visitation has been extended through April 30th. These efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19 will assist in Staying Home and Staying Healthy. The Department needs your assistance with children, families and specialists to Stay Connected through planned parenting time and specialist contacts. Understanding that this transition happened quickly, we appreciate your patience and efforts to support this strategy and work through any challenges.

The Department and the network of supportive partners are here for you.

If you are experiencing virtual learning technology barriers for children in DCS care, please follow this guidance:

1. Check with your school for a solution.
2. DCS will make community resources available **HERE**.
3. Contact DCS at the volunteer mailbox below if you cannot find a solution between school and community resources.

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 power to help our community through this difficult time.

Again, thank you for all you do to care for the children of Arizona.

Mike Faust
Director