

March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear DCS Contracted Service Providers,

As we continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation in Arizona, the Department is constantly reassessing our directives & guidelines to determine if extensions, alterations, or expiration is warranted. The Department will remain flexible and continues to be mindful and cautious of the COVID-19 virus and the associated impact to serving Arizona children and families.

At this time this directive on virtual services modifications will be expiring on **4/1/21**. As the number of COVID-19 infections continue to trend down and more vaccines are being administered to the public, the Department is planning on ending these modifications starting 4/1/21.

Below are guidelines & areas in our contracted services where service modifications should either continue or return to being provided as outlined in the contract scope of work. **The General Guidelines section below shall remain in place in order to limit the exposure and risk of COVID-19.** Please continue to reference the DCS COVID-19 website for more information & resources - <https://dcs.az.gov/covid19>.

#### General Guidelines:

- All contracted services shall be conducted virtually if anyone in the household involved with the service has reported symptoms of COVID-19, tested positive for COVID-19, or pending a test for COVID-19.
  - If a client is reporting symptoms of COVID-19 they should be instructed to seek a COVID-19 test. If the test results are negative, services should return to in-person.
  - If a client tests positive or refuses testing, services shall return to in-person after the CDC recommended isolation period (at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND at least 24 hours have passed without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms).
  - The above guidelines should continue to be followed even for clients who have already received a COVID-19 vaccine.
- All other exceptions for virtual services must have written approval from DCS Program Manager & Program Administrator.
- Continue to follow the DCS In-Person Visit Guidelines (<https://dcs.az.gov/covid19>) for Child Contacts & Parenting Time (Visitation).

#### Foster & Adoption Supports

- All licensing activities & monitoring of home visits shall be done in person as outlined in the contract scope of work if a child/ren are placed in the home.
  - Monitoring visits shall return to be conducted in-person including if there are no children placed in the home.

- Support Groups may continue to be done virtually until further notice.
- Foster Parent College shall return to being provided in-person.
- DCS will continue to do routine in-person visits.

Parent Aide/SVO – The following service modifications shall remain until the termination of the Parent Aide contract.

- Supervised Visitation (Parenting Time) should continue to be conducted in-person following the DCS In-Person Visit Guidelines (<https://dcs.az.gov/covid19>).
  - Visitation may be moved to virtual visits if a placement or caregiver has determined the need to quarantine per CDC guidelines due to COVID-19 direct exposure and/or confirmed positive. In these cases, document in case notes and notify the DCS Specialist.
- Parent Aide Skill Building sessions may be conducted virtually after **at least two in-person sessions** in order to establish rapport and engagement with the family.
  - Intake meetings are required to be conducted in-person.
  - If parents are not fully engaged in skill sessions services should be provided in person.
- Continue to follow the DCS In-Person Visit Guidelines (<https://dcs.az.gov/covid19>).

In-Home - Preservation & Reunification – The following service modification shall remain until the termination of the In-Home services contracts.

- In-Home visits shall continue to be done in person based on the frequency outlined in the contract SOW. Allowable service delivery modifications due to COVID-19 are below:
  - For Moderate Preservation cases – **1 in-person contact per week** is required, remaining contacts can be conducted virtually.
  - For Intensive Preservation cases – **1 in-person contact per week** is required. Families with an existing safety threat are required to have **2 in-person contacts per week**, remaining contacts can be conducted virtually.
  - For Reunification cases – **1 in-person contact per week** is required. Families with an existing safety threat are required to have **2 in-person contacts per week**, remaining contacts can be conducted virtually.
- If a family has tested positive for COVID-19 or symptomatic or is self-quarantined pending results of a COVID test, we are not requiring provider staff to enter the home in these cases. Providers are to go to the home and put eyes on child. We are asking providers to see the children either through the window, at distance, or some creative way to check on the family.
- Continue to follow the DCS In-Person Visit Guidelines (<https://dcs.az.gov/covid19>).

In-Home - SENSE (Nurse Home Visits) – The following service modification shall remain until the termination of the In-Home services contracts.

- Home visits made by the SENSE trained nurse shall be done in person to conduct assessment of children(s) general health and developmental screenings. Administrative activities may be completed virtually or remotely after the physical assessment has been completed.
- If a family member in the home has tested positive for COVID-19, is symptomatic or is self-quarantined pending results of a COVID-19 test, nurse home visits may be rescheduled until participants are symptom free for at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and at least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever (including fever, chills, rigors, and body/muscle aches) without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms. Nurse home visits should not be postponed longer than 3 weeks.
- Continue to follow the DCS In-Person Visit Guidelines (<https://dcs.az.gov/covid19>).

Building Resilient Families

- In the home services shall return to in-person as outlined in the contract scope of work.

Psych/Counseling & Unit Consultation Services

- Psychological Evaluations should be delivered as outlined in the contract scope of work
- Individual/Family Counseling Services should be delivered as outlined in the contract scope of work.
- Unit Consultation with DCS staff should be delivered as outlined in the contract scope of work
  - Clinical interviews with parents and other participants should be done in-person.
  - Unit Consults shall report regularly as scheduled to their designated DCS field offices.  
Please work with your assigned DCS Program Manager & Program Administrator.
- Telephonic consultations remain permissible as outlined in the contract scope of work.

AFF Substance Abuse Treatment Services

- Initial assessments may continue to be done virtually until further notice from the Department.
- Case Coordination & Management of services shall be done in person per the SOW
- Educational Groups, Therapeutic Groups, Community/Peer support groups may continue to be done virtually until further notice from the Department.
- TDM/Staffing with DCS may be done virtually per the request of DCS.

Home Assessment & Courtesy Supervision & ICPC

- Emergency & Scheduled Visitation have returned to in-person.
- All initial and follow up contacts with the family will be done in-person.
- Monthly ICPC child contacts will be done in person as detailed in the contract scope of work.

Young Adult Programs (Independent Living Skills & Fostering Sustainable Connections)

- Services shall be delivered in-person per the contract scope of work following the precautions outlined in the DCS In-Person Visitation Guides.
- One virtual visit per month per youth will be allowed for situations where staff are in quarantine due to direct exposure but no symptoms.
  - Document in the Monthly Progress Report (MPR), how the service is tailored to be effective in the virtual environment.
- The best interest and preference of the youth should be considered if services are requested to be provided virtually.

Thank you for your partnership,

**Mike Faust**

Director