

TOP FIVE QUESTIONS PARENTS HAVE ABOUT THEIR DCS CASES

Hello!

We understand that this is a stressful time for you and your family, and we want to help by answering some of the questions you may have. In this section, we have answered the most commonly asked questions, but we also know every family's needs are different. Therefore, as we move forward we will continue to build upon the initial questions we have listed here. We, the Parent Advisory Collaborate will continue to inform you of changes, so please remember to visit the DCS Covid-19 (dcs.az.gov/covid19) web page regularly for the most current messages from us.

1. Why is all of this happening?

Agencies, businesses, and medical providers around the U.S. are following recommendations to create "social distancing" because of a virus that is known as the Coronavirus or COVID-19. The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets that are spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes or by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching his or her own mouth, nose, or their eyes. "Social Distancing" is critical to slow down the spreading of the virus by minimizing in-person contact between people as many people that have the virus do not immediately show symptoms of being sick. Sometimes it can take up to 12 days for someone to begin to show symptoms. As a result, the Department of Child Safety is taking steps to try to protect us from getting the virus.

2. What can I do to be successful?

It is important for you to continue to fulfill your responsibilities while working your case plan. We understand that change can be very difficult; however, it is still vital that you continue to fulfill your responsibilities while working your case plan. Though it may be frustrating conducting visitation with your child virtually, it is a necessary measure to keep our community safe and slow the spread of COVID-19. Please continue to actively work with the service providers who are assigned to you. If you are unsure of what to do, reach out to the service provider or your case manager to discuss how they are providing virtual case management. If you miss any important appointments please let your case manager know. Remember, stay positive and as a community we'll get through this together.

- Remember to keep in contact with your assigned DCS Specialist via email, phone or text and to provide him/her with updates on your progress. Please allow your Specialist 24 hours to return your call. If you are unable to reach the Specialist after 24 hours, you can call the main office number, and request to speak to their supervisor.
- If you are referred for services during this time, please respond promptly to service providers trying to set up phone calls, or "video" interviews with you.
- If you do get sick, please stay inside and take care of yourself. Notify your DCS Specialist as soon as you can that that you were sick.
- If you are required to participate in substance abuse testing, make every effort to test, do not miss a test. If you do not have transportation, you can use public transportation, it continues to run. Maintain contact with service providers, parent aides, substance abuse counselors, therapist, and instructors for parenting and behavioral management classes, all will be continuing to service your needs, virtually.
- Never miss a court hearing, and always maintain contact with your attorney. Do not be afraid to contact the attorney to express your concerns, remember your attorney works for you.

3. How do I find out about my child's health?

Ask your child how he/she is feeling, you know your child best and can detect any problems. Communicate via phone or e-mail with your child's caregiver and inquire about their health. Under the present Covid-19 conditions, your child may not physically go to the doctor's office for a check-up, but will have a virtual or telemedicine visit, ask to be included in the visit, physical or virtual. Ask for a copy of the doctor's report, recommendations and if your child receives vaccinations ask for a copy for your records.

4. Will my children returning home be delayed?

DCS encourages all parents to continue to engage in all Court and Case Plan recommendations. Court hearings will continue to be scheduled with an exception of Family Treatment Court Hearings and Private Severance Evidentiary Hearings. DCS, providers, and all parties strive to have your child/ren returned home as soon as safely possible. If there are questions about specific case, related information please contact your assigned DCS Specialist.

5. How to get the most out of virtual visits

During these time of uncertainty around the COVID 19 virus DCS has made the tough discussion to have visits between parents and children occur virtually to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, parents and caregivers, providers and transportation workers. We understand many parents and children will have a difficult time with this transition and hope to resume in person visits as soon and safely possible. If you do not have access to video technology please let your case manager know so that they can try to support you. The DCS service providers can arrange for you to use their equipment. Here are some ideas for interactions during virtual visits based on your child's age;

- Birth to 1 year old- read, sing, talk about simple concepts such as colors, shapes, play "Peek a boo" "Head and shoulders knees and toes" , ask your baby questions and wait for their response, establish eye contact as much as able to do so virtually
- 1-5 year olds- read, sing, play go fish with a deck of cards virtually, play tapes and sing along to nursery rhyme songs, use an interactive song you can move/dance to such as I'm a little teapot, going on a bear hunt, establish eye contact if possible, have both the caregiver and parent read the same book together to your child, learn about a new animal, play "Simon Says", have a tea party together
- Elementary school age-read, dance virtually, help with homework, share a family story, play a game virtually such as a card game, checkers, do the same art/craft such as making pinwheels with paper, paper airplanes, charades, bingo, write a letter together for an extended family member/sibling, write a story
- Middle/high school age- play a dance/workout routine if virtually possible together, play a mutual game such as word games, bingo, apples to apples, write a mutual letter to an extended family member/sibling, tell a family story, learn origami, play "Would you Rather", write a story or journaling together

In Support,

The Parent Advisory Collaborative

The Parent Advisory Collaborative is comprised of parents who previously had open DCS cases, and community family members who together, work with DCS to represent the voice of parents and families cooperatively.