



Safe Families *for* Children

Safe Families for Children Coronavirus Overview - Volunteers (updated 3-16-2020)

At this time, please read the CDC update on COVID-19 here and familiarize yourselves on it: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>

Some quick facts to help you know about COVID19 to date:

- Some key symptoms (but not exhaustive) include: High Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath.
- Older people and people with certain underlying health conditions like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, for example, seem to be at greater risk of serious illness.
- The virus is currently believed to spread through person to person contact or through infected surfaces.
- Wearing a facemask is currently not a benefit to avoid being infected.

Here are practical pro-active practices to consider as a host family or part of the circle of support (paraphrased from the CDC):

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Encourage you and children in your care to use soap and wash hands for as long as it takes you to sing the ABC song or at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- If soap and water isn't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

As you can imagine, with young children, please take every precaution when they are in your care. If you have any questions, please contact your primary doctor or medical professional.

Finally, since the COVID19 virus is relatively new, make sure you are using respectable sources for updated information moving forward.



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Safe Families for Children Coronavirus Response

We understand the system is concerned about how to respond to certain questions and situations at this time. The following provides our guidelines on how to address these questions.

At the moment, as an agency we are not making the decisions to temporarily stop hostings. We believe the need for support to families will only increase during the next few weeks. However, if host families are not responding to needs out of caution, we obviously will not be able to host in that region until things improve.

Q. What is Safe Families stance on travel locally or internationally?

A. Volunteers who have traveled out of the area recently, has been exposed to someone diagnosed to have COVID, or has fever, cough (100+) or shortness of breath should not be involved in home visits, family friending, etc.

Related, if a host is traveling out of state and would like the child to go with, the parent's permission should be requested.

Q. How should home visits be managed during this time?

A. Home visits: It's important that home visits by a family coach or supervisor continues. If volunteers are uncomfortable with it, staff should step in.

- Workers should ask the families they are visiting, when they set up the appt, or before they enter the house if anyone in the house.
 - has traveled out of the area recently.
 - has been exposed to someone diagnosed to have COVID19.
 - has fever, cough (100+) or shortness of breath.

Q. How should general parent-child visits be handled?

A. In light of the situation, here are our best suggestion on these visits:

- Parent-child visits: It's best if they occur in a park or other setting and avoid locations with high traffic.
- Staff/vol should ask parents if they are experiencing any symptoms when they call to confirm their visit as well as asking the caregiver if the child/family are experiencing any symptoms (If so visits should be cancelled by supervisor and rescheduled.
- If so, then the FC/vol should reschedule, after asking to have the child come to the door for a brief check-in, unless it is the child who is symptomatic.
- Phone or video can be used for those families that meet one of the above criteria



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Q. Should existing host families consider returning children to their biological families?

A. In many cases, children in your care are in the best place to be as the person in need may have other issues that keep them from care, including hospitalization. Unless your coach or the parent themselves request it and they are not carrying, we recommend you keep the child(ren) in your care. However, children going back and forth between home and hosting should consider reducing these transitions for the next few weeks.

Q. If a child(ren) seems to show symptoms of the virus, what should they do?

A. The following image shows the key differences between COVID19, the flu and allergies. Understand at this time, health professionals are getting overwhelmed with cases and will only want you to contact them if you feel certain they show strong symptoms of all three. If so, then please call your primary physician, health department or find the nearest testing site. (image info taken from CDC website.)

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|--------------------|---|
| CORONAVIRUS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● FEVER● COUGH● SHORTNESS OF BREATH● SYMPTOMS APPEAR 2-14 DAYS AFTER EXPOSURE |
| FLU | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● FEVER● COUGH● SORE THROAT● HEADACHES● FATIGUE (TIREDNESS)● MUSCLE OR BODY ACHES● RUNNY OR STUFFY NOSE |
| ALLERGIES | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● SNEEZING● ITCHY, RUNNY OR BLOCKED NOSE● ITCHY, RED, WATERING EYES● WHEEZING, CHEST TIGHTNESS, SHORTNESS OF BREATH, COUGH |

Q. What are ways we can keep the virus from spreading?

A. While the spread of the virus has yet to be determined, there are practical ways to reduce the spread of the virus that we know of.

- Wash hands with soap and water on a regular basis for no less than 20 seconds each time.
- If possible, use hand sanitizer when out and about. It should have at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Reduce entering large gatherings of people, including those with older adults.
- Do not visit hospitals or retirement communities where older adults live.
- If you or a child get sick, then please stay home and isolated until you or they are cleared as healthy.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touches surfaces daily.
- Immediately throw tissues into the garbage after use.



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These are only a few tips but take as many sensible measures as possible.

Q. Should families keep children out of schools during this time?

A. If a child(ren) is registered to attend school, please follow the school protocol. If the child(ren) are in daycare or private childcare, please contact them to determine how they are ensuring the safety of the child(ren).

Q. What happens if someone related to your SFFC circle of support is found to have the coronavirus.

A. Please consider the next steps:

- **Step 1:** A placing parent should be immediately notified if a member of the host family comes down with COVID19 symptoms or if their child is thought to be symptomatic. If a parent requests their child back, obvious we would comply.
- **Step 2:** Ensure that person(s) are being directed to the nearest health professional and following the proper protocols for evaluation and if necessary, quarantine. If the infected is the hosted child(ren), immediately separate them from others. Parent needs to be involved in all decision-making regarding treatment, whenever possible.
- **Step 3:** Identify one office point person who will handle ongoing communication with the impacted person(s) and the family in need. Set up dedicated lines of communication both over phone, text and email to ensure all communications are being sent and received
- **Step 4:** Identify and communicate to the entire circle of support that impacts that person(s) with acknowledgement of the situation and encourage self-evaluation of their condition.
- **Step 5:** Have the SFFC lead contact the national office at 773-653-2200. They will identify someone to act as the point person for SFFC to media and communicate to key shareholders within SFFC on the situation.
- **Step 6:** Determine and document any entry points for the virus and immediately close them off from further contact. In addition, start disinfecting and cleaning surfaces and areas that the infected person has been in.
- **Step 7:** Maintain a regular communication with all parties every hour for the first 48 hours (as possible) and then daily afterwards. If there are any significant changes, please contact us and key stakeholders immediately.



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Final Notes

While the severity of this virus remains to be fully understood, it is okay to keep proactive vigilance, especially with children in our care. Understand, it is okay to say no, maintain distance, and stay away from large gatherings.

Take the time to visit the CDC website daily and practice the procedures to reduce the spread of transmission in the office and your workspace.

If you have any questions please contact Safe Families at 773-653-2200.