Safe Families for Children Coronavirus Overview

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 though 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.
- 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.
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.

Q. What happens if we need to or have to close our intake referral line?
A. We are starting to see some communities decide to quarantine entire cities, which would make it impossible to manage new cases. Our recommendation is that if you feel that the public health of the children, your community and your office workers may be impacted, you should consider checking with the first the Health Department, then closing down the intake referral line if you feel it is needed. In addition, you may want to consider creating a temporary voice mail recording explaining the decision and providing emergency contact info if necessary and a time you expect to return back to normal.

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.

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.

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<th>ALLERGIES</th>
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<td>- FEVER</td>
<td>- FEVER</td>
<td>- SNEEZING</td>
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<td>- COUGH</td>
<td>- COUGH</td>
<td>- ITCHY, RUNNY OR BLOCKED NOSE</td>
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<td>- SHORTNESS OF BREATH</td>
<td>- SORE THROAT</td>
<td>- ITCHY, RED, WATERING EYES</td>
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<td>- SYMPTOMS APPEAR 2-14 DAYS AFTER EXPOSURE</td>
<td>- HEADACHES</td>
<td>- WHEEZING, CHEST TIGHTNESS, SHORTNESS OF BREATH, COUGH</td>
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<td>- FATIGUE (TIREDNESS)</td>
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Q. What are the key 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 within the home.

- 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 touched surfaces daily.
- Immediately throw tissues into the garbage after use.

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. Should we close the Safe Families offices?
A. While that is completely up to the local chapters, we do recommend you set up the ability for all employees and volunteers to work and contact each other remotely as a precaution to a wider decision locally to reduce travel and interaction between people. If your office hosts older adults, especially with problematic health issues, please be mindful of the impact of the virus has on them.

Q. Is there any reason the chapters need to contact the National Safe Families for Children office?
A. The national office is here to assist in the success of your local and state efforts. However, related to the virus, there is no need to contact us unless the following:

- Your office is closing and you are moving to a remote status.
- You are turning off your local intake line
- Someone related to SFFC in your area has tested positive for the coronavirus
Please call the national intake line at 773-653-2200 to let us know of these updates and we will maintain ongoing communications with your team.

Q. What happens if someone related to SFFC is found to have the coronavirus.

A. Please consider the next steps:

- **Step 1**: 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.
- **Step 2**: 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.
- **Step 3**: Identify and communicate to the entire circle of support that impacts that person(s) with acknowledgement of the situation and encourage self-evaluate their condition.
- **Step 4**: Contact the national office at 773-653-2200 and Steve Raquel at [630-803-0485 or sraquel@safefamilies.net](mailto:sraquel@safefamilies.net). Steve will act as the spokesperson for SFFC to media and communicate to key shareholders within SFFC on the situation.
- **Step 5**: 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 6**: 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 immediately.

**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.

In addition, as a chapter, you will need to be proactive with families and volunteers who will be looking to you for advice and direction during these unknown times. Take the time to visit the CDC website daily and practice the procedures to reduce the threat of transmission in the office and your workspace.

If you have any questions please contact Steve Raquel at [sraquel@safefamilies.net](mailto:sraquel@safefamilies.net) or [630-803-0485](tel:630-803-0485).