

A Message on COVID-19 from the Children's Bureau

Given the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, we are aware of the impact that it may have on the populations you serve.

As our partners at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) continue to work closely with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners, as well as public health partners across the globe to respond to contain COVID-19, we want to inform you that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at HHS continues to provide updates and guidance from medical professionals about how to protect you and those you serve from COVID-19.

We urge you to stay informed and vigilant, and share information with your staff, subrecipients, and community partners and stakeholders. For regularly updated information from the CDC, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Everyday preventative actions can include the following:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; throw the tissue away immediately after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, as well.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. While it may seem simple, germs often spread this way.
- At the workplace, wash your hands frequently and practice caution when coming into contact with commonly touched surfaces like door handles, handrails, and elevator buttons.

Additionally, the CDC recently issued a series of guidance documents on how to prepare and take action for COVID-19. Some of these guidance documents may be relevant to your work and the populations you serve. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>

Employees planning domestic travel should routinely check CDC's website for information about COVID-19 for travelers and travel-related industries and take into consideration the location and purpose of their travel. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Children Involved in the Child Welfare System

The CDC provides guidance and FAQs specifically on COVID-19 and children:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>

Foster care providers and agency case managers can make use of the CDC's guidelines for how to prevent the disease in educating children about the disease: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

Foster Care Providers

The CDC provides specific guidance for households that will be helpful to foster family home providers:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html>

While the CDC does not provide guidance specifically targeted to the types of child care institutions in which some children in foster care reside, it does provide guidance for long-term care facilities that is of relevance to such placement types: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html>

Child Welfare Workforce

In addition to the guidance mentioned above for individuals regarding prevention, the Department of Labor's, Occupational Safety and Health Administration provides information concerning coronavirus: https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/novel_coronavirus/

It is critically important that child welfare agencies develop a process to remain informed of the ongoing updates and instructions from the CDC and state and local public health officials in order to make informed, fact-based decisions about meeting the needs of children in foster care during this time.

We encourage you to maintain contact with your local health department if you or your client exhibits symptoms that may be related to COVID-19.