

Updates regarding COVID-19

Dear Residential Child Care Provider,

Thank you for all the much needed support and care you continue to provide to children, youth, and families. We wanted to provide you with an update as we implement temporary changes to CPS policy related to in-person, face-to-face contacts between children and their caseworker, between children and their parents, and between siblings.

Effective July 23rd 2020, CPS caseworkers will be required to continue in-person, face-to-face contact with children in conservatorship of DFPS, ***except when one or more*** of the following applies to the individual child's circumstances:

1. The child has tested positive for Covid-19 within the last 14 calendar days, or the CPS caseworkers has been notified by and/or verified with the caregiver that the child is under quarantine due to exposure. ***In-person, face-to-face contact for at least 14 calendar days following this notification should be done virtually with the child, unless an extenuating circumstance applies. Unless court ordered, this guidance applies to parent/child, and sibling visits as well.***
2. The child is currently placed in a **General Residential Operation** (Basic Child Care facility, Emergency Shelter, or Residential Treatment Center) that has reported that at least 10% of the facility's current child census has tested positive within the last 14 calendar days and/or is currently under quarantine due to exposure for Covid-19. ***The caseworker will conduct virtual visits with the child during this timeframe.***
3. If there are no concerns regarding child safety, all monthly face-to-face contacts for children with primary medical needs or complex medical needs can be made virtually until further notice.

Please note that exclusions listed above do not apply to visits that are conducted as a part of the Heightened Monitoring of a facility or a foster home by CPS staff.

For contractors that operate a General Residential Operation (GRO), the above mentioned temporary change to CPS policy will be reliant on the

calculation of and subsequent reporting of the positivity/quarantine rate in your facility.

Calculating the Census Rate (Required of GRO Contracted Providers Only)

All General Residential Operations (GROs) that contract with DFPS or the Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) will be responsible for the ongoing determination of the current percentage of children who have tested positive or who are under quarantine due to exposure in the operation. The overall percentage will be determined by taking the total number of current children placed who have tested positive and adding them to the number of children quarantined due to exposure, and dividing that sum by the total current census for the facility.

$$\text{Facility \%} = \frac{(\# \text{ Children with positive test}) + (\# \text{ Children quarantined due to exposure})}{\text{Total \# of current child census}}$$

Reporting a Census Rate of 10% or Greater to DFPS (Required for GRO Contracted Providers Only)

Many GRO providers will never meet the 10% threshold, and therefore are not required to report via the survey. The survey referenced in this section should only be completed by GRO providers when, and after, they have reported a 10% or greater rate in their facility.

When a GRO provider determines that the positivity rate for the operation is 10% or more of the current child census, they will complete a survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XPLLXP6> that will be sent to the department with the relevant information.

The survey will contain the name of the operation, the person reporting the information, the percentage of child census that meets the positive/quarantine parameter, and the date of the most recent positive test/quarantine date, and a narrative box to be completed if there is other information you will.

The facility will be required to calculate the rate daily, and ***provide a weekly updated survey every Friday*** with information showing the facilities current positivity rate. ***Once the positivity rate declines to 10%***

or less of the total current census, and maintains at 10% or below for at least 14 calendar days, in-person visits will resume.

Survey information will be provided to the CPS Director of Conservatorship Services who will be responsible for notifying all Regional leadership. Regional leadership will share this information with all CVS, Local Permanency Specialists and Placement Specialists in their region, as well as SSCC leadership. Caseworkers will then reach out and coordinate virtual face-to-face visits with the operation.

Excluding Children That Are No Longer Contagious From the Calculation

Children ***do not need*** to produce a negative test in order to be excluded from the count.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers good guidance on when affected individuals can end their isolation. There is a symptom-based option that does not require a negative test. For more information please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>.

If you have any questions, require assistance with this process, or believe that there are additional factors that should be considered, please e-mail Hector Ortiz, CPS Director of Conservatorship Services at hector.ortiz@dfps.state.tx.us.

As always, there is no way we could do this important work without you. Thank you for all you are doing to keep the children, youth, and families of Texas safe and healthy during this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

Deneen Dryden

Deneen Dryden
Associate Commissioner for Child Protective Services
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services