



children's home & aid

March 13, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian/Foster Parent,

The health and safety of your children, staff, and families is a top priority of Children's Home & Aid. Because of the national attention focused on the Novel Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, we want to update you on the program's efforts to protect children, staff, and families.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) describe COVID-19 as a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Symptoms include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Children seem to be less likely to become ill. Public health officials project more cases may occur across the United States but the risk to our community is considered low.

Illinois Department of Public Health is closely monitoring the progress of the illness and following the advice of the CDC. As a preventative measure, cleaning crews will deep clean staff offices and visiting rooms as needed. Importantly, staff will be practicing basic hygiene routines and encourage you to do the same. Washing your hands regularly with soap is the best way to stop the transmission of the virus.

In order to keep everyone safe, these practices are encouraged to prevent viral spread of illness at home, school and community:

- **Good hygiene practices**
 - Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – two rounds of the Happy Birthday song – is best. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at 60% alcohol is a suitable alternative.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands immediately (if you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve and not your hands).
 - Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

- **If you are sick, stay home and take care of your wellbeing**
 - Anyone who is sick (with symptoms of respiratory illness such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should consult with their health care provider and stay home from school or work until their symptoms resolve.
 - Missed in office appointments that are cancelled ahead of time will not count against any attendance policies.

- Parents/guardian of children with chronic health conditions (i.e. asthma) should work with their health care provider to ensure any necessary rescue and controller medicines are on hand and take special care to keep the illness well managed and under control.

According to local health officials, no special disinfection products are recommended at this time.

Illinois Department of Public Health and federal authorities may issue new guidance and we will keep you updated on changes and the impact to our programs. At this time, based on the recommendations of local health officials, we are not considering closing our early childhood centers or suspending home visits and client services.

For the most up-to-date resources and reliable information, please visit:

- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html
- <http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus>

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your case manager / licensing representative / clinical / youth services team directly.

Respectfully,

Amanda Whitlock, LCSW
Senior Vice President
Children's Home & Aid