



NEW MEXICO CYFD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Important Websites:

<https://cyfd.org/>

www.newmexico.gov

<http://cv.nmhealth.org/>

newmexicokids.org/

Important Numbers (Information Provided in English and Spanish):

New Mexico Department of Health Hotline: 1-855-600-3453 (Available 24/7)

Resource Hotline: 1-833-551-0518

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Is CYFD still investigating reports of suspected abuse or neglect?

A: Yes. CYFD will continue to investigate reports of suspected abuse or neglect. Our Statewide Central Intake office will still receive, assess and appropriately log and field calls to Investigations.

Citizens who suspect a child is being abused or neglected by their parent or other caregiver should call #SAFE from any mobile phone or call 1-855-333-SAFE.

Q: How will caregivers contact the agency in the event of an emergency?

A: Caregivers will continue the current process of reaching out to their Worker and other supervisory and administrative county level staff for emergencies. If you have been unable to reach your Worker, Supervisor and County Office Manager, you may call SCI at #SAFE from any mobile phone or 1-855-333-SAFE. SCI operates 24/7 and has the ability to contact staff for assistance with reaching a county point of contact.

Q: Is CYFD still conducting family visits?

A: Yes. CYFD is committed to the safety, health and welfare of the children, youth and families we serve and to that of our workers. This includes our responsibility to provide the critical, court-and federally-mandated direct services to you and to the children in your care, including child visits and family visits. We recommend family visits in an outdoor space where safety and security risks are minimized such as a park without a playground. Court hearings are being done with video or teleconferencing. If you have questions about visits, please reach out to your case worker.

Q: How are workers safeguarding the child and family's health, and their own, during visits?

A: We have directed our staff to take the cleaning, hygiene, social distancing and other precautionary measures outlined by the New Mexico Department of Health to help prevent anyone, including children, contracting the virus.

The department's first preference for case worker visits is now to conduct the visit using videoconferencing tools. The federal government announced new guidance allowing for videoconferencing to replace face-to-face visits in exception circumstances, which include public health emergencies that prohibit or strongly discourage person-to-person contact. Most measures

In the case of an in-person home visit, the following are the directions workers have received:

- Before initiating a visit of any type, case workers must ask questions about the health, age and travel history of people with whom they or the child are visiting.
 - In cases where an individual has traveled outside of the country, visits will not take place until the person(s) have contacted the New Mexico Department of Health and followed the protocols they are given.
 - In cases where an individual is at increased risk for complications from COVID-19, based on age and health conditions, workers will visit with the child without that individual present.
- Workers have been instructed to conduct visits in the community as often as possible so that they can practice social distancing. Office visits are only happening as exceptions at this time.
 - When visiting, workers have been instructed to wash hands and use hand sanitizer before approaching the home(s) and after the visit is completed.
 - Whenever possible, visits are to happen in the community and in areas where social distancing can be best practiced.
- Workers are also instructing families on the protocols of social distancing, hand washing, cleaning "high touch" surfaces such as door handles, faucets, telephones, and providing them with the attached posters for reference.
- Workers in our offices are implementing social distancing with colleagues. All individuals who can complete their work from home have been instructed to do so. Under exceptional circumstances where office visits must happen, visiting rooms are being cleaned after each visit and at the end of the day with enhanced regimens.
- Workers who have traveled are following the direction from DOH regarding self-isolation or quarantine. Workers are told to stay home if they are ill.

Q: For new placements, are there any assurances the children or youth have not been exposed to COVID-19?

A: If our staff are aware that the child has traveled out of state or out of country, has had contact with someone who has tested positive, been exposed or has symptoms, they will provide that information to the new provider.

The provider will be required to monitor the child's symptoms and to call the New Mexico Department of Health's Toll-Free Coronavirus Hotline 24/7 at 1-855-600-3453 immediately for assessment and guidance.

Apart from that circumstance, at this time, no assurances can be made that children/youth coming into care have not been exposed to COVID-19. The Department is following all applicable guidance and recommendations of the CDC and DPH related to the identification of COVID-19 symptoms.

Q: What is the protocol if a youth is suspected of having COVID-19?

A: Contact the youth's physician and/or call the New Mexico Department of Health's Toll-Free Coronavirus Hotline 24/7 at 1-855-600-3453 immediately for assessment and guidance.

Also, immediately notify the DFCS Case Manager and OPM via email and telephone call.

The Department of Health medical professionals will provide you with guidance on next steps, including whether and where to go should you need further, in-person medical attention. This triage system is being implemented in order to minimize overwhelm at hospitals and doctors' offices and to ensure patients receive the best possible care in order of need. *Please do not show up unannounced at your doctor's office and do not go to the ER unless you are experiencing a medical emergency.*

Q: For caregivers who must continue to work, can Reasonable & Prudent Parenting Standards (RPPS) be used to identify a substitute caregiver?

A: Yes, caregivers can use RPPS to identify a caregiver to supervise children while they are at work. Foster parents must provide the name, address, telephone number, days, and hours that the child will be with the substitute caregivers to their caseworker.

Q: What is the status of trainings and meetings?

A: Certain online trainings such as the RAFT trainings for newly licensed resource families are available. Contact your placement worker to get the information for access.

Current and scheduled in-person trainings and group meetings are being postponed. Staff may provide one on one training or training via webinar or teleconference and will contact families to schedule these.

Q: Are Family Court appointments still taking place?

A: At this time, certain non-urgent court appointments have been postponed. Court visits may take place via teleconference or videoconference. Where in person hearings are necessary (where time limits are at issue) the court will practice Social Distancing.

Young children are not permitted into courts at this time. Youth who are scheduled for discharge hearings are encouraged to appear in court with their youth attorney but may choose to appear via videoconference.

No one should attend court in person if they are showing signs of illness or meeting high risk criteria as outlined by the Department of Health. High-risk criteria include health concerns such as asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol or any condition or treatment that compromises the immune system. Telephonic appearances are permitted in this circumstance.

Families are encouraged to visit nmcourts.gov to locate specific information for the courts with which they have contact.

Q: Are there specific guidelines for ICWA Court and ICWA cases?

A: Please be aware that many tribes and pueblos have closed. No Adjudication or TPR will proceed without an ICWA representative on ICWA cases. The Court has vacated Termination of Parental Rights Hearings on ICWA case for the next two weeks from March 16, 2020 to March 27, 2020. The Court will continue to evaluate settings and further matters may be vacated. The Court does not intend to proceed with a TPR setting without tribal participation.

As always, tribal social workers and representatives are permitted to appear by phone for any Court hearing. During this health crisis they are strongly encouraged to appear by phone rather than in person.

If any tribal social worker or representative is unable to appear in court for Permanency or Judicial Review hearings due to closures or travel restrictions, CYFD will provide the tribe with a copy of any Court order and the Court will reopen a hearing upon a tribe's request within 30 days of the original hearing

If you are aware of any difficulty in participation due to closures or travel restrictions, please alert CYFD and the Court so appropriate action can be taken to vacate a setting.

CYFD shall ensure a qualified expert witness (QEW) is available for any hearing or file an appropriate motion. If a tribal member is not available for a permanency or judicial review hearing, the Department will be required to put language in any Court order that the tribe may reopen the hearing by request made within 30 days. The Department shall immediately email the tribal representative the same information. Tribes may have additional time to reopen if they demonstrate they were unable to receive such information due to closure.

Q: Are there specific guidelines for juvenile delinquency cases?

A: Yes. If a child has a juvenile delinquency hearing, **their presence in person will be required** but family/youth should contact the Public Defender or child's delinquency attorney for updates on Court hearings. Please keep monitoring updates from the judiciary and CYFD. *Please also review our Juvenile Justice FAQ's for more information on how the Juvenile Justice Division is operating right now.*

For specific information about your court cases, please contact your Children's Court Attorney or Guardian ad litem. Please also visit nmcourts.gov for additional information.