**FAQ for Caregivers During COVID-19**  
April 22, 2020

**Q:** Since schools are closed and I have children at home, is there childcare/respite services available?

**A:** Respite Care:

The County has limited access to childcare for essential staff but can partner with caregivers who still need to go to work. Additionally, respite services for caregivers can be provided in limited circumstances.

The priority is to follow all Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for proper screening of symptoms and exposure of COVID-19, and any subsequent needs for testing or quarantine/isolation. The County is screening providers who are still able and willing to support respite care.

For more information on how to access respite care, please contact Resource Advocacy Support Services (RASS) at (408) 529-0113.

**Childcare**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the DFCS Child Development Program continues to make child care available to caregivers of children in out-of-home care through various resources.

Childcare is available for:

- Children receiving foster care payments including AFDC, Emergency Assistance or County-only funds.
- Santa Clara County DFCS children in out of home placement including those placed outside of Santa Clara County, but placed within California.
- Children placed with caregivers including emergency placement with relatives, foster parents, and resource families.
- Children under 13 years of age. Children 13 & older if they have special needs and qualify on a case by case basis.
- Childcare will be provided for hours when all caregivers in the home are working, either at home or in the office.
- RFA approved caregiver(s) of children who meet certain requirements, such as Title IV-E, may qualify for limited child care, up to 30 hours per week, for up to 60 days when seeking work.
- A new application must be completed each time there is a placement change.
- Child Care provider must be licensed through California’s Community Care Licensing.
- Alternate childcare providers may be considered under special circumstances.
- All childcare is paid based upon the age of the child and approved regional market rates.

For questions about accessing childcare for foster children, please contact your social worker or reach out to RFchildcare@ssa.sccgov.org or call 408-271-7444.
Q: I am a single caregiver and I am caring for children. Is there any support available to help me shop for groceries?

A: The department will be partnering to help coordinate volunteers through Help One Child, KAPFA and RASS to support families that need grocery shopping assistance. For more information, please contact Amber Brandom/QPI Coordinator: amber.brandom@ssa.sccgov.org or (408) 206-4689.

Additionally, below are some links for drive thru goods distribution (diapers, wipes, formula, food, clothes and other necessities) throughout Santa Clara County:

**Food Resources:**

- Second Harvest Food Bank
- First 5- FRC Distribution Sites
- City of San Jose Food Resource Map
- Food Resources Active During Shelter-in-Place in Santa Clara County
- Help One Child
- Catholic Charities: Drive Thru Food Distribution

**General Resources:**

- ConXion
- First 5 Resource Guide
- African American Community Services Agency (baby items)

**First 5- FRC Distribution Sites**

**For April, diapers and baby wipes are available. In May, there will be diapers and wipes as well as infant formula and other essential supplies for families.**
Q: Is there behavioral health support available for foster youth who may be experiencing anxiety, depression or other mental health needs?

A: DFCS is collaborating with County Behavioral Health Services to start support groups for youth who may need additional mental health support. More information will be provided soon.

**SCC Behavioral Health Services** (general)

**Bill Wilson Center for Living with Dying**

**Help for Students in Crisis**

**Virtual Circle of Support**

Nationally-recognized child and adolescent psychiatrist, Dr. Jess Shatkin, author of Born to Be Wild: Why Teens Take Risks, and How We Can Help Keep Them Safe, will be our speaker this year. Dr. Shatkin will speak to us from his office in New York.

- Advice for families, teachers, and the community during this time of sheltering in place
- What a pandemic and isolation may mean developmentally and psychologically for children and adolescents
- What to look for as worrisome symptoms
- How to foster resilience and mental health during this time
- Evidence-based strategies for helping our youth both now and beyond our current crisis
- Live Q&A session at the end of the event

Q: What should I do about postponed IEP/504 assessments?

A: Caregivers can continue to contact the Educational Services Unit at Edsu@ssa.sccgov.org. The EdSU unit is still holding virtual educational consults to help support children and foster youth with special academic needs. Referrals are also being accepted for distance tutoring to help children and youth who require additional academic online support or have special educational or 504 needs that must be uniquely addressed.

With respect to Chromebooks, the school districts started to roll out Chromebooks to students last week. The EdSU staff and Educational Liaisons have been instrumental with helping social workers and caregivers navigate the school districts to access this technological resource for students. In addition, CASA has also been fundraising for laptops and has supported funding for over 25 Chromebooks or laptops for youth.

- Information about education and home-based learning: Santa Clara County Office of Education and Parents Helping Parents
- SCCOE Inclusion Support WarmLine for information and referrals for youth with disabilities and other needs. Offered in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Contact Warmline at WarmlineRemoteLearning@sccoe.org or (408) 453-6651
Q: What will the timelines for court cases look like now? What should I do about visitations?

A: The Santa Clara County Juvenile Court has issued a standing order regarding visitation during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Judicial Council has issued an emergency rule of court on this issue. While court-ordered visitation must continue, social workers may change the manner of visitation to videoconferencing or telephone where appropriate. Social workers must assess on a case-by-case basis whether stopping in-person visitation would be significantly emotionally harmful to the child. In making this determination, the social worker will consider a number of factors, including the parent’s history of consistent visitation, the recommendations of the child’s therapist (if any), and any known medical vulnerabilities of the parties involved. It is presumed that ongoing in-person visitation is appropriate for children under 3, and for children previously engaged in overnight visitation, unless there is strong information indicating otherwise.

Additionally, DFCS is setting up visitation protocol taking into considerations public health guidance. This includes, but is not limited to, asking screening questions of all participants prior to visit, having visits outside if appropriate and weather permitting, sanitizing the visitation rooms before and after each visit, limiting the types toys and books in each visitation room, so that any items which are brought into the room can be sanitized after use, ensuring parents, children and staff wash hands before and after visits and use of cloth face coverings by parents, staff and children, if appropriate.

Q: I recently loss my job. Does DFCS have any resources to help me provide care for children in my home?

A: We are currently reviewing the recommendations from the Governor and are awaiting further instructions from the CA Department of Social Services (CDSS). Information on programs and how to access will be distributed as available.

Please consult with your social worker, support agency (Kinship Adoptive Foster Parents Association– KAPFA, Resource Advocacy Support Services– RASS, or Kinship Support Team – KST) or the Resource Family Approval (RFA) Manager, Gilbert Murillo at (408) 501-6561 for any concerns or additional support.

County residents may be eligible for financial assistance due to loss of income as a result of COVID-19. Families can apply for assistance via Sacred Heart Community Services.

Below are links to local and state resources that provide financial and/or unemployment assistance, CalFRESH benefits, etc.

SSA Department of Employment and Benefit Services

CA Employment Development Department
Q: I have some concerns about children going into placements and whether they have the appropriate medical screening for COVID-19?

A: Before any placement is made, DFCS is taking precautionary steps by screening all children for COVID-19 (per CDC guidelines regarding symptomology and exposure). When child/youth come into care, if they are displaying possible COVID symptoms or have been exposed, the County has a process for testing and quarantine prior to placement. Additionally, DFCS has established a process for consultation with SCCVMC medical staff to address any medical issues and the need for additional care.

Q: Will the court timelines for biological parents be extended?

A: We do not know the answer regarding timelines for court cases as this is an unprecedented time. It is anticipated, however, that parents will most likely be provided additional time frames to complete court ordered services and the necessary in-person visitations with their children. DFCS will notify caregivers as more information is available.

Q. I have not received my foster care payment for this month yet. Who do I call for help?

A. For foster care payment issues, please call the assigned Eligibility Worker on your case. If you do not know who your assigned worker is, please call the Foster Care Eligibility department at (408) 271-7400. Due to the Shelter in Place, response time may be delayed as staff are working remotely.

Q. Can a Resource Parent Receive a Stimulus Payment for a Foster Child?

A. If the resource parent filed taxes in 2018 or 2019, claimed a foster child as a dependent, and is otherwise income-eligible for a payment, they will automatically receive an additional payment for that child.

Q. What if I have not filed 2019 taxes?

A. If a foster parents did not yet file 2019 taxes, go to https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payment-information-center for information on how to use the “Get My Payment” tool and/or to file taxes.

For non-filers, the IRS has a new web tool to assist those who don’t normally file taxes. Information and a link to the tool are here: https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here