

# Foster Care Program Operations – *Pandemic Phase*

---

- **BIO VISITS**

- Provincial Director email stated that maintaining a child's connections continues to be important; Each circumstance will have unique considerations. Please work directly with a child's caseworker on plans for family contact that factor in safety and the most current advice from Alberta Health. Direction is being sought from the Child Welfare Regions about cancelling bio-family visits and replacing them temporarily with phone contact or skype, etc. (blocked calls from the Foster Home).

- **NEW PLACEMENTS**

- Foster parents with open beds will need to confirm that they will accept new placements during this time. This information will need to be conveyed to intake.
- Need to develop a form to be signed off by FP – Jo will make one -
- FCSWs will still need to complete 'new placement' home visits to ensure children receive proper orientation to our foster care program

- **FACE-TO-FACE –**

- Ongoing Face to Face Contact – as little F2F contact as possible with foster parents and children in their homes
- Children may have less severe response to the virus, but are high transmitters of disease
- Exceptions:
  - New/less independent families may require some ongoing in-home contact to help them learn processes and do paperwork – use discretion in determining which homes should be visited

- **FOSTER FAMILY /CHILD MEETINGS –**

- At this time, initial and renewal Licensing visits will be ongoing – FCSW will attend these
- Service Team Meetings – if at all possible, meetings will be completed by phone or Skype; Foster parents can also connect by phone.
  - FCSW will not attend in person unless Caseworker or CSD worker insist on going to the home – FCSWs will continue to support their families in person in these cases.
    - PKIC meetings – our staff will not be going to these, unless absolutely necessary re: hostility in service team, etc.
    - PRAT meetings – if PRAT matters are happening, we do have to support our families, but ensure that everyone is healthy – meetings may have to happen through phone, or skype.
    - Provincial Director email stated that expiring licenses can be extended for a period of up to three months. Please connect directly to your licensing officer if you think that this applies to you.

- **FOSTER PARENTS**

- Remind Foster Families that they have the right to decline attending group meetings or can decline to a worker coming to their home if they believe the person may be unwell, or if someone in their home is unwell.
- Be creative to find a way for caseworkers to meet with child F2F outside the home – e.g. going for a walk, etc?
- The provincial CS director has announced families can make additional alternate child care arrangements and that they will be reimbursed them for those costs with **no preapproval required.**
- A decision has been made to cancel ALL CI staff training events currently scheduled until further notice.

- **FOSTER HOME – Illness**
  - Foster families must inform Crossroads immediately if someone in their home is unwell / showing symptoms – Children’s Services is tracking cases
- **STAFF – Illness**
  - staff with symptoms must stay home, until they are cleared to return to the office.
  - Those with sick family members may take family sick time, or work at home until they are cleared
- **STAFF TASKS**
  - Healthy staff are expected to come into the office
  - If working at home – catch up on paperwork, continue contact with families via phone
- **OTHER MEETINGS**
  - Training / Support groups to be done by Live Stream
  - Small meetings can continue to take place at the office
  - Break Night, training, large group gatherings are cancelled
- **DOCUMENTATION**
  - NOTE to FILE to be created for
    - Contact with families
    - F2F visits
    - Foster family non-compliance (e.g. Foster Parent can’t get a document due to illness)