



COVID-19 Updates  
March 16, 2020

Dear DCYF families, youth, contracted partners and other members of our community,

Below are updates on COVID-19 in Rhode Island, and its impact on DCYF's services. For the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 in Rhode Island, please visit the Rhode Island Department of Health's COVID-19 website: <https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/>. The Department of Health also hosts a 24/7 COVID-19 hotline at 401-222-8022. And for our families, if you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your Caseworker.

#### Updates on DCYF Services and Family Court

- The Family Court will remain open this week, but all court calendars are canceled. More information [click here](#).
- As a precaution and to ensure the safety of our staff and families, **DCYF is canceling all family visitation this week (March 16 to March 22)**. This includes family visitation at the Training School, at DCYF offices, visits arranged by foster parents, and our contracted visitation and congregate care programs.
- For face-to-face visits with youth and families, we have asked our staff to review their scheduled meetings, determine which children and families require contact, what level of contact they require, and how we can manage next steps. Our staff will be pre-screening households where we have visits to determine if anyone is sick and/or asked to quarantine. If household members are sick or on quarantine, our staff will attempt set up alternative ways of being in contact (such as FaceTime, Skype, etc.).
- **All foster parent trainings are canceled this week (March 16 to March 22).**

#### Meals for School Children

Due to the closure of schools, free "Grab and Go" meals are available (March 16th - March 20th) for school children throughout Rhode Island. New sites are still being added so please check back or contact your school district or charter school for more options. There are no ID or residency requirements, but the child must be present; schools cannot give a meal to an adult on behalf of a child. Please visit this website for a listing of each Grab and Go site: <https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/about/foodsites/index.php>

#### COVID-19 Preventative Measures

It cannot be overstated that the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to take preventative measures, including:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Please stay out of work when you are sick.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or use a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces.
- If you have not already done so, get a flu shot.

#### Mental Health Support

This is a very stressful time for everyone and it is important that we all stay calm and support each other. The state of Rhode Island has a hotline, called BH Link, that is available 24/7 for anyone needing mental health support. You can reach them at 401-414-LINK.