



To: Foster Care Providers

From: Julie Farber, Deputy Commissioner, Family Permanency Services and Angel Mendoza, Chief Medical Officer

Date: March 19, 2020-**Revised September 10th, 2020**

Re: Emergency Guidance Regarding Referral and Acceptance of Placement Referrals from OPA to Foster Care Agencies

We are all heartened that children and youth have not been as severely affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. To ensure that children continue to be placed in a timely fashion, ACS is providing the following guidance for providers regarding placement acceptance and referrals.

Section A explains the placement process and expectations of providers. Section B explains the relevant medical and public health context.

A. Placement Process and Expectations

1. ACS expects all foster care agencies to accept referrals from OPA for placements for all children and youth regardless of suspected, possible or known history of COVID-19 exposure or infection
2. All children and youth coming from the Children's Center, Youth Reception Centers, or Sheltering Arms Reception Center will be tested for fever and travel history prior to departure for placement by the Nursing team. If they have a fever, they will be held until no longer febrile. If the child or youth has no COVID-like illness (e.g. cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea) and, no history of exposure to a close contact who tested positive for COVID-19, the Nursing team will clear them for placement.
3. If a child or youth becomes symptomatic, agencies should work with foster parents to implement measures immediately to separate that individual, as much as practicable, from the rest of the household. Refer to CDC guidelines on preventive steps for household members and caregivers <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>
4. Residential providers should have space identified to isolate and care for symptomatic youth. Residential providers that do not have capacity to isolate and care for symptomatic children should contact the Children's Center's Placement Stability Unit (PSU): 646-916-0940¹ or Children's Center's CFS team: 646-689-4631². See ACS *Referring children to a COVID-19 Alternative site guidance* updated on July 14th, 2020.
5. ACS has identified quarantine and isolation facilities to house children and youth in care who are either COVID-19 positive, symptomatic and awaiting test results, or who have been exposed, for whom there is no available foster care back-up. Please contact Children's Center's Placement Stability Unit

¹ Contact on Monday-Friday 8am-4pm.

² Contact evenings, overnights, weekends and holidays



(PSU): 646-916-0940³ or Children's Center's CFS team: 646-689-4631⁴. See ACS *Referring children to a COVID-19 Alternative site guidance* updated on July 14th, 2020.

B. Medical/Public Health Context

NYC has begun its phased RESTART and we have entered the suppression phase of the pandemic. In practical terms, this means the following:

1. New York City is actively engaged in contact tracing. Expect to be contacted by the Test and Trace team of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene if you have had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
2. People who have contacts with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases will need to quarantine and monitor their health for 14 days after the contact with the confirmed case.
3. All symptomatic (symptoms include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea) individuals will need to isolate themselves for 10 days or until asymptomatic for 24 hours, whichever is longer.
4. Providers should report to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) if there are 2 or more individuals who have symptoms or are confirmed COVID-19 in a congregate setting. The Provider Access Line (PAL) is 866-692-3641.

³ Contact on Monday-Friday 8am-4pm.

⁴ Contact evenings, overnights, weekends and holidays