

**Message from County of Orange Social Services Agency
Children and Family Services Division Director, Anne Bloxom**

Dear Caregiver,

I am reaching out to you on behalf of the County of Orange Social Services Agency (SSA) to assure you that your family's well-being and the children in your care remain our highest priorities.

This is a stressful time for our entire community and I want to assure you that SSA is working diligently to address concerns and help mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus as much as possible. As our Resource Families, Relative Caregivers and extended family care providers, we want to ensure that you have access to accurate information and guidance about what can be done to minimize the risk of infection and further transmission of COVID-19.

Many parents are feeling unsure right now about what to share and how much to share with their families when so much is uncertain. You are not alone. Families the world over are faced with this same challenge. Please keep in mind that children often feel what you feel. Answering their questions calmly and providing reassuring and age-appropriate information will go a long way in assisting them with understanding what is happening and helping to manage anxiety they may be feeling.

Although information is evolving quickly on this topic, please rest assured that SSA leadership is meeting with public health officials regularly and will continue to keep you apprised of any new developments. Our Children and Family Services Division staff will continue to focus on its child protection work and provide essential services to families, while taking precautionary measures to protect our staff that engage directly with families.

Please note: information and guidance regarding parent/child visitation and monthly contact visits is being developed and will be shared soon.

If you or any member of your household develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 symptoms, which include fever, cough, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, you are urged to call your medical provider immediately for advice. Please also consult with your medical provider for any other symptoms that may be severe or concerning. We ask that you notify and/or maintain contact with your assigned social worker in the event there are symptoms of or exposure to COVID-19 with anyone in your household. SSA will work with you on a plan to ensure the well-being of the child(ren)/youth in your care. While these can be times of uncertainty, there is much that can be done to prepare, get informed and remain safe.

Included with this letter are a range of resources for your reference. As resources may change frequently, please stay in contact with your caseworker to learn about additional/updated information. The Resource Family Liaison team is also a valuable resource for any questions or referrals and can be reached at (714) 714-8255. You may also call our general number at (714) 704-8000.

Thank you for collaborating with SSA to ensure the health and well-being of the child(ren) in your care and your entire family.

The following resources will help you remain informed and offer opportunities to take positive action. These resources also include kid-friendly flyers to help you educate the children in your care about everyday preventive actions:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

- For regular updated information from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.
- For guides in how to prepare and take action for COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>
 - Talking to Children about COVID-19 [English and Spanish]:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>
 - English - https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/02292020_NASP_NASN_COVID-19_parent_handout.pdf
 - Spanish- https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/02292020_NASP_NASN_COVID-19_parent_handout_Spanish.pdf
- For more information on traveling and travel-related industries:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
- CDC's guidelines for how to prevent the disease; educating children about the disease:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>
- CDC guidance for homes: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html>

County of Orange, CA:

For Orange County specific information and resources, including statistics, flyers, infographics and guidance, please visit the County of Orange Health Care Agency (HCA) website:

www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus

Everyday preventative actions can help prevent the spread of illness:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; throw the tissue away immediately after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, as well.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. While it may seem simple, germs often spread this way.
- At the workplace, wash your hands frequently and practice caution when coming into contact with commonly touched surfaces like door handles, handrails, and elevator buttons.

Standard precautions for vulnerable populations, including children with special health care needs:

Vulnerable populations include people who are 60 years old and older, people and/or children with special medical needs and health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease and weakened immune systems.

- For small children, wipe their hands often; use soap and water as often as possible.
- Avoid gatherings
- Avoid grocery stores and/or other environments where people may be ill.
- Avoid sick people. If someone is sick in your home, provide your household member with clean disposable facemasks to wear at home, if available, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to others.
- Avoid sharing personal items like utensils, food, and drinks.
- Use a separate room and bathroom for sick household members (if possible).
- [Clean the sick room and bathroom](#), as needed, to avoid unnecessary contact with the sick person.
- Create/update and follow your written emergency care plans to include names and phone numbers of emergency contacts (i.e., medical providers, caseworkers and back-up caregivers), medication lists, etc.
- Share your emergency care plans with your caseworker and support system.

Kid Friendly Flyers:

- Hand Wash Flyers: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/buttons.html>
- Kid Friendly Stickers: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/stickers.html>

Kid Friendly Videos:

- Kid Friendly videos washing hands: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/videos.html>
- Wash your hands for kids: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJG72sycQB8>

For the latest COVID-19 developments impacting Orange County schools, including distance/online learning, please visit the OC Department of Education Newsroom at: <https://newsroom.ocde.us/>

Students can still receive free and reduced meals if a school is closed. Orange County school districts are making plans to offer grab-and-go meals to students impacted by school closures. Start dates, sites and service hours will vary, so be sure to check your local district's website.

- Please see a link of all schools districts, to find out more about meals for your children:
<https://ocde.us/SchoolDistricts/Pages/default.aspx>
- The California Department of Education has received a special waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that will enable some school districts to provide meals to students during a coronavirus-related closure.
- The waiver applies to districts that had previously been approved to operate the Summer Food Service Program or Seamless Summer Option, which are federally funded programs that serve free meals to children 18 and younger when school is not in session. They assist communities in which 50 percent or more of the student's qualify for free and reduced-priced meals.
- The waiver allows meals to be served at school and non-school sites so students can be fed without increasing the risk of spreading germs.

Emergency Child Care Bridge Program: This program helps caregivers navigate, find and pay for child care within 24 hours. Please speak with your caseworker for more information on this program.

As resources may change frequently, please stay in contact with your caseworker to learn about additional/updated resources. You may also call the Resource Family Liaison at (714) 704-8255.