

March 12, 2020

Dear Caregiver,

Like all of you, I am concerned about the presence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in Illinois and its potential effect on you, the children you are caring for and our staff that support you. ***Your safety and the safety of the children we serve is, and always will be, my top priority.*** The state of Illinois is working around the clock to contain COVID-19. While public health officials anticipate there will be additional cases, it is important to remember the risk of COVID-19 to the general public in Illinois remains low.

I want to assure you that our leadership at DCFS is continuing to monitor any new developments about the spread of the disease. We are in contact daily with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and other state agencies experienced at responding to infectious disease outbreaks.

Proactive Steps to Stay Healthy

The 2019 novel coronavirus is most commonly spread from an infected person to others through the air by coughing or sneezing, or by touching an object or person with the virus (for example, touching a door knob or shaking hands), then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands. Because of this, you and your family are encouraged to follow these common-sense practices:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a flexed elbow or tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the DCFS Central Office of Licensing at 217-785-2688.

For additional information and Situation Summary updates regarding COVID-19, please refer to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and IL Department of Public Health (IDPH) website links:

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

IDPH: <http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus>

OSHA: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html>

I am incredibly proud of all of you. Your personal commitment to caring for our most vulnerable children is the foundation of our department. Take pride in knowing that every day, you are having a positive impact on the lives of children and creating brighter futures for youth that desperately need your support.

Thank you for all your efforts!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marc D. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Marc D. Smith
Acting Director, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services