



**Division of Child Protection & Permanency
Return to Fieldwork Staff Guidelines for Phase 2 of New Jersey’s “The Road Back” Plan
Effective July 6, 2020**

On March 19, 2020 DCF made temporary operational adjustments in DCP&P practice in response to Governor Murphy’s Executive Order 103 which declared a public health emergency as a result of COVID 19. The plan was then revised on May 18, 2020 in response to changing conditions and is being modified again, effective July 6, 2020 in response to New Jersey’s advance to Stage 2 of the restart and recovery plan. In keeping with the overall guidance for Stage 2, DCF is cautiously resuming specific activities while putting in place necessary safeguards to protect the health of the Department’s staff and clients.

LOCAL OFFICES:

25 Local Offices will be open statewide; at least one in each county, 2 in Camden and 2 in Essex Counties, and 2 in Hudson.

ABC	B/H	Camden	CGS	Essex	H/S/W/M	M/U	O/M	S/M/P
Atlantic East	Bergen Central	Camden South	Cumberland West	Essex South	Hunterdon	Middlesex Coastal	Monmouth North	Morris East
Burlington East	Hudson West	Camden East	Gloucester East	Newark South	Mercer North	Union East	Ocean North	Passaic North
Cape May	Hudson Central		Salem	Newark Center City	Somerset			Sussex
					Warren			

STAFF AND VISITORS:

All staff and visitors will be required to enter through the main entrance of the building. Staff will not be permitted to use alternate entrances that may have been available pre-COVID. All staff and visitors entering a DCF office will be temperature screened prior to entering the building. The screening will be conducted using a thermal body scanner. If the scanner is not available, a temperature check will be conducted using a temporal thermometer. No one with a body temperature above 100.4 degrees will be allowed to enter the building.

In addition to the temperature checks a verbal screening will be conducted. All staff and visitors will be asked:

1. Has anyone in your home tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
2. In the past 14 days, have you, your children, and/or anyone else in your household had any of the following symptoms?
 - Fever of 100.4 or higher
 - Cough

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
3. Have you, your children, and/or anyone in your household had close contact¹ with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
4. If the answer to all of the screening questions is “no”, staff and visitors will be able to enter the building. If the answer to any screening question is “yes”, the person will be sent home and asked to reschedule their visit/ appointment.

All staff and visitors will be required to wear a face covering while inside the building and when moving through common areas and in shared bathrooms. Social distancing at a distance of 6 ft should be maintained at all times.

- All staff will be required to wear a face covering at all times while
- in the building unless they are sitting at their workstation alone or in a room alone behind a closed door.
- All staff are required to wear a face covering at all times when face to face with a client.
- All clients will be asked to wear face masks throughout all face to face contacts, even within their own homes. Staff will be provided with surgical masks to provide to clients if they don't have their own.

Any person who refuses to wear a mask at a DCPD office will be asked to leave.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING:

Supplemental Cleaning Services

Beginning July 6, a cleaning service has been hired to be on site in all open offices during regular work hours, Monday through Friday between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. The cleaning service will clean and disinfect visitation rooms between visits, wipe down car interiors between families and drivers, clean bathrooms at regular intervals throughout the day and wipe down surfaces in the waiting rooms. At the end of each day a thorough cleaning will be completed overnight. Deep cleaning of the offices will occur immediately following a COVID-19 exposure or confirmed positive case

Supplemental vehicle cleaning services will be provided as follows:

- Initial cleaning of State Vehicles before deployment to staff

¹ Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet for a period of 10 minutes or more.

- Cleaning of State Vehicles when they are returned to the office after a field visit during shift hours.
- Vehicles that are returned after the 5:00 PM shift will be cleaned the following day before there are redeployed.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Visitation Rooms

All meeting and visit rooms in CP&P offices should be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use using the supplemental cleaning service referenced above. Items that cannot be easily cleaned should be removed from visit rooms. This includes stuffed animals, dolls, soft side toys, and books. Time permitting, the spray should be left to dry, but at a minimum all hard surfaces and highly touched surfaces should be wiped down. Visits or meetings should be spaced a minimum of 10 minutes apart to allow for cleaning and ventilation of rooms.

Visitation rooms have been cleaned and all toys have been discarded. Families will be encouraged to bring their own toys, books and games to visits. Any toys left behind after a visit will be discarded when the room is being cleaned for the next family. Visits or meetings should be spaced a minimum of 10 minutes apart to allow for cleaning and ventilation of rooms. CP&P staff should notify their supervisors if anyone exhibits the identified [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 in a meeting or visit room. The room must be taken out of service, cleaned and disinfected as per [CDC guidelines](#).

CP&P staff should notify their supervisors if anyone exhibits the identified symptoms of COVID-19 in a meeting or visit room. The room must be taken out of service, cleaned and disinfected as per CDC guidelines.

VEHICLES:

State Vehicles

Prior to July 6th, DCF prepared the fleet of vehicles for resumption of use.

As was the previous practice, state vehicles will be shared amongst all DCP&P staff. All county vehicles will be moved to the open local offices. Staff requiring a vehicle will go to the open local office in their county to sign out a vehicle. Upon collecting the car keys from the car coordinator, staff will be provided with a “to go” kit.

The “to go” kit will include

- sanitizing products,
- Surgical masks for client use,
- Paper products such as tissues/napkins/paper towels,
- Gloves,
- thermometer

Upon returning the vehicle to the office, staff will be required to return the “to go” kit with the keys to the car coordinator. Staff remain responsible for disposing of garbage from the interior of the car upon returning the car to the lot.

The vehicles will also be outfitted with an extra pair of goggles/ face shield and gowns that will remain in the car for emergencies.

In addition to the cleaning service on site at the local office, state vehicles may be cleaned using car wash services that are [operating on contract](#) with the State of New Jersey.

Vehicles that are returned after the 5:00 PM shift need to be cleaned the following day before there are redeployed.

DCPP staff who have signed out vehicles to use for an extended period of time are responsible for wiping down the interior of the vehicle after each use. Frequently touched surfaces in vehicles used to transport children should be cleaned and disinfected prior to and after each use. Surfaces include car keys, steering wheel, seatbelts, seat covers, gear shifts, seat adjustment levers, windows, door handles, turn signals, vehicle dashboard, digital touchscreen, and other touched surfaces.

CP&P staff should notify their supervisors if they transport anyone who exhibits the identified [symptoms](#) of COVID-19. The vehicle must be taken out of service. The cleaning service will clean and disinfect the vehicle per [CDC guidelines](#).

Personal Vehicles

Staff who would like to use their personal vehicle for home visits and field work will be allowed to do so during **daytime hours only**. Staff assigned to SPRU may not use their personal vehicles for field work during their SPRU shift.

- Staff may **not** transport a child or client in their own vehicle
- Staff will submit their mileage for reimbursement according to their current travel class.
- Staff who plan on using their own vehicle for field work will be required to receive approval from their supervisor in advance.

Repairs

Motor pools across the state are all open and available to assist staff 24 hours a day should the need arise. Staff will continue to reach out to motor pool for repairs as usual.

Reporting Infected Person Transported in State Vehicle

CP&P and provider staff should notify their supervisors if they transport anyone who exhibits the identified symptoms of COVID-19. The vehicle must be taken out of service, cleaned and disinfected as per CDC guidelines.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):

- Staff are expected to bring a clean cloth face covering to work every day
- Staff will be provided with the necessary and appropriate PPE in preparation for field work and face to face interactions.

- Staff will receive PPE distribution protocols through their Local Office Manager.
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- In the event that a shortage of PPE interferes with the ability of staff to complete field work.
 - The Local Office Manager, in consultation with the Assistant Area Director or Area Director, will be responsible for determining which field activities will be completed in each shift until full PPE inventory is restored.
 - The Local Office Manager is responsible for communicating immediately with the permanency casework supervisor or supervisor when the expected in person visits are unable to occur, and the assigned permanency worker must make attempts at video contact, phone contact, or escalation of legal or other interventions as appropriate to ensure the safety of children.

- If a client refuses to wear a mask in their own home during a field visit, the DCPD worker should suspend the meeting, and contact their supervisor on necessary next steps. Depending on case circumstances, the next steps may include use of additional PPE, contacting law enforcement, court involvement, or other actions.

- If a client refuses to wear a mask during transportation, the DCPD worker should proceed as if the client is COVID+, by wearing an N95 mask, gown and gloves while conducting the transport.

- The type of PPE to be used will vary based on activity. See COVID-19 DCPD Health and Safety Guidance.

COVID-19 TESTING:

The NJ Department of Health encourages state staff to be tested for COVID 19. At this time, staff are encouraged, but not required, to be tested. [Testing locations](#) are updated every Friday.

If a staff member tests positive for COVID-19 or becomes aware that he or she has been exposed to COVID19, the staff member must advise the DCF Office of Human Resources immediately. Staff are to take the proper action, as indicated by their physician and directed by the Office of Human Resources. The DCF Office of Human Resources has a HIPAA compliant [process for notifications](#), which staff are to follow.

SERVICE PROVIDERS:

Child Health Units (CHU)

- DCF is working with the Rutgers University School of Nursing to bring Child Health Units back to DCPD local offices. We anticipate that Pre-Placement Assessments will be able to resume by July 13, 2020. In the interim, staff should seek guidance from a supervisor regarding an appropriate method of obtaining an assessment.
- Child Health Unit staff will ensure that appropriate supplies are available in the Local Offices named above.
- Child Health Unit nurses will not work from the Local Office but will be on call according to a schedule provided to the Local Office. When a Pre-Placement Assessment is needed, the Local Office will contact the nurse on duty, who will drive to the office and perform the exam within 30 minutes. However, COVID positive youth and youth who are designated as PUI will not be assessed by the nurses and an alternate arrangement will be identified by the caseworker in consultation with their supervisor.
- The Child Health Units will be providing the LOMs and ADs with a schedule of PPA coverage within the week.
- The Child Health Units will resume resource home visitation on July 13.
- Details regarding the resumption of the in-home nursing program will be provided at a later date.

Child Protection Substance Abuse Initiative (CPSAI)

- CPSAI providers will continue to be available to receive referrals for assessments and other work provided remotely.
- The Peer Recovery Support Specialist program remains available to support parents in beginning and maintaining active recovery.
- Between July 6, 2020 and July 26, DCPD caseworkers and supervisors may make referrals directly to the CPSAI program supervisors. Assessments shall be scheduled according to the standard priority 1-2-3 criteria using the 11-46 referral form. Referrals shall not be triaged to WFNSAI.
- Assessments shall be conducted using remote video technology accessible to caregivers personally or through DCPD.
- Urine drug screens are not available on site.
- Local Office Managers should schedule a meeting with the CPSAI program supervisor serving their office during the week of July 13th and the week of July 27th to review the status of all active referrals from the office.

Domestic Violence Liaisons (DVL)

- The DVL program will continue to operate remotely. DVLs will not work from DCPD Local Offices.

Clinical Consultants

- CSOC Clinical Consultants will continue to operate remotely. Clinical consultants will not work from DCPD Local Offices.

Visitation and Supervised Visitation Services

- DCF is working to ensure the resumption of face to face visitation and supervised visitation services effective the week of July 13th.
- Guidance regarding protocols for safe visitation is being issued separately and can be [found here](#).

Family Preservation Services

- DCF is working to ensure the resumption of face to face Family Preservation Services effective the week of July 13th.

CP&P OPERATIONAL FIELD GUIDANCE

STATE CENTRAL REGISTRY (SCR)

The State Central Registry (SCR) will continue to triage calls and prioritize those in need of immediate response based on three priority levels (as defined in the below chart).

<p>Priority 1 Intake</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate – safety/perp has access • Any injuries, bruises to the head, face, torso, broken bones, Child death, near death, abuse physical or sexual abuse suspected.
<p>Priority 2 Intake</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Tier Immediate – CPS immediate but perp has no access to the child • Parents who may refuse to pick kids up from ERs • Child death no siblings • Child Welfare deaths • Safe Haven • Substance Affected Newborns • Substance misuse of a caregiver
<p>State of Emergency Priority 3 Intake</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tertiary Immediate – request for services • Homelessness • Basic needs • Child behavioral health • Interstate requests • Court checks/parole requests • RIs for pending investigations

Effective Monday, July 6:

- Most CP&P staff will work remotely, based in their homes, and will perform work in the field or in an office as needed to carry out services to children and families as described below.
- Service providers, including Child Health Unit nursing support, will be available to support casework functions as detailed below
- All CP&P staff will resume face to face visits with families and resource parents, with a priority on face to face contact with families assessed at High Risk, Very High Risk, families experiencing domestic violence, families with a safety protection plan, and families with

children under the age of 3. CP&P staff will be provided the necessary and appropriate personal protection equipment and associated training in order to carry out field functions during the coronavirus pandemic

- All AFSW's will resume face to face supervised visitation and transportation for families and children.
- All SFSS's will resume accompanying FSS staff into the field to supervise their work as needed.
- State Central Registry staff will report back full time to 50 East State Street, Trenton.
- The COVID-19 Response Teams will end.
- The Special Response Unit (SPRU) will be back in full operation.
- Supervised parent/child and sibling visits will resume no later than July 13, for children in foster care. Please refer to the [visitation guidance](#).
- DCP&P staff will continue to support young adults that are nearing their twenty-first (21st) birthday by extending their eligibility for ongoing child welfare services after the age of 21. Young adults that are turning 21 during the COVID-19 pandemic will remain open with DCF's Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) through December 31, 2020, unless they specifically request, in writing, to have their case closed.
- Staff will be expected to be available to participate in court hearings unless on approved leave or furlough.
- Out of state recreational travel for children in foster care is prohibited.
- Any exceptions to out of state travel for children in out of home placement must be approved by the Area Director.

RESOURCE CARE STAFF

Resource Staff will conduct in person visits to all resource family placement in accordance with policy.

PLACEMENT FACILITATION

- Resource staff will facilitate all emergency placement requests when kin/fictive kin placements are not feasible. Resource staff will communicate directly with the resource supervisor to provide placement facilitation results for dissemination to permanency/intake supervisor.
- COVID PUI/ POSITIVE- RESOURCE HOME FACILITATION
- Area Directors notify CP&P leadership through the case updates email address (CaseUpdates@dcf.nj.gov) when placement of a COVID-19 PUI (Person Under Investigation) or positive child(ren) is required and fictive kin/kin is not available. (CaseUpdates@dcf.nj.gov)

Central Office leadership will confirm the information and notify the Office of Resource Families (ORF) Administrator Dawn Marlow if there is a need for facilitation support into a resource home identified as being willing to accept children that have been exposed to or tested positive for COVID-19.

PRESUMPTIVE PLACEMENTS

When a DODD removal is completed, and a relative resource placement is found and determined through CHRI and CARI to be a viable option, the following guidance is suggested:

1. Local office staff will notify Local Office resource staff and, coordinate through remote technology a walkthrough of the resource home to allow the resource worker to view the home and determine safety assessment and initial review for OOL standards.
2. Once placement is made the resource worker will contact the kinship parent and discuss the home study process and provide electronic copies of necessary paperwork.
 - Form 5-2 Resource Parent Home Study/License Application
 - Form 26-15 Authorization for Release of Information
 - SAFE Questionnaire 1
 - Form 5-25 Local Police Check forms
 - IdentGO New Jersey Universal Fingerprint Form(s) for every adult member of the household. This form needs to be pre-filled with the Resource Type and Local Office Cost Code in box #7= Contributor’s Case #. This is to ensure that the print results and any subsequent red flags are returned to the correct LO
 - I. Form 4-10 CP&P Kinship Caregiver Standards Agreement
 - II. Financial Form

HOMESTUDIES

Resource workers will follow the home study guidance below beginning with in-person visits and interviews.

The processing of new **non-kin** resource home studies inquiries will be suspended until further notice. Child specific non kin home study inquires will be accepted. Resource staff will prioritize kinship homes with children in placement that have pending home studies. ORF-CPSs with OOL, ARFS and Local Office resource staff will review these homes through monthly impact team meetings to determine barriers and challenges, and to identify a plan and timeframe to process these homes.

This guidance is to be utilized during the state of emergency targeting the following priorities:

Priority 1 Home Study	Outstanding Kinship homes with children in placement
Priority 2 Home Study	Outstanding Kinship homes without children in placement
Priority 3 Home Study-	All other existing applications for non-kinship home studies

The RFSW will schedule a virtual interview with the resource family within the first 30 days to review Q1 and discussion of hybrid home study. The worker will send out all required references and review all required documentation needed for the home. After each interview, whether in person or virtual, RFSW will complete PSI form and submit to supervisor for review. After Q1 and Q2 interviews, RFSW will complete Harvesting Sheet and submit to supervisor for review and subsequent conference.

The RFSW will schedule the second interview in-person to complete Q2 with resource parents, interview with all household participants and review of the home to determine OOL standards.

In person interviews can take place in the outdoor space of the home (i.e. backyard, front yard) to limit the amount of time in the actual house. Pictures can be taken of documents such as ID's, car insurance, vet records, etc. and will be accepted by OOL as part of the Home Study. All primary and secondary caregivers and children in the home must be interviewed in person and the home visit should be scheduled when all will be available.

The RFSW may conduct all other home study activities and follow up remotely. including follow up discussions of areas identified from review of the SAFE Questionnaire 1, third party references or reports, etc.

RESOURCE FAMILY IMPACT TEAM MEETINGS

Resource Family Impact Team Meetings will continue to be held via remote technology until further notice with a focus on troubleshooting all pending kinship resource family home studies.

The virtual meetings will be focused on solution-oriented discussions to support the local office resource units with troubleshooting any potential barriers to licensure of pending kinship resource homes and issues regarding existing licensed resource family homes. The following staff should participate in the virtual meetings.

- Local Office Staff: RFSW, RFSW Supervisor, Resource Casework Supervisor
- Assigned Caseworker and supervisor of presumptive placements
- Area Resource Family Specialist (ARFS)
- Office of Resource Families Case Practice Specialist
- Office of Licensing: Supervisors and Inspectors Intake and Generic

The Office of Resource Families CPS will be responsible for documenting and distributing action plans of identified tasks and follow up items to all meeting participants.

A status review of the action plan with all participants will be completed within 30 days or by the next scheduled impact team meeting.

RESOURCE FAMILY TRAINING (PRIDE and TRADITIONS OF CARE)

Tradition of Care

Until further notice, the full training curriculum will be modified and delivered in two phases with a third phase training plan detailed below.

Phase One: PowerPoint Presentation: A Resource Parents Introduction to Kinship Care This PowerPoint presentation will be delivered by the CP&P local office/area office resource trainer. The trainer will be responsible for scheduling virtual training(s) for all the presumptive kinship caregiver(s) from their local office identified during the virtual impact meetings. Priority is to be given to those kinship homes that are overdue for completion of licensing.

*Pre-service Training hours: approximately 2.5 hours (These hours can be completed in multiple sessions at the family's request).

Phase Two: EMBRELLA Webinar: Social and Emotional Issues in Kinship Care- this interactive webinar will be facilitated by EMBRELLA. EMBRELLA will schedule two sessions in each week to accommodate daytime and evening hours at 12pm and 7pm. Once the trainer completes the power point presentation, they will discuss the next phase of training with the kinship caregiver and identify which scheduled webinar will be appropriate. The trainer will be responsible for registering the kinship caregiver(s). EMBRELLA will follow up with an invitation letter to the family upon registration. A notification of completion will be provided to the RFSW trainer.

*Pre-service Training hours: approximately 1.5 hours

Phase Three: Upon completion of the EMBRELLA Webinar, the trainer will complete an individualized training plan with the kinship caregiver and schedule the 5 mandatory courses required for a Certificate of Completion.

Mandatory Course Hours: 13.5

PRIDE- Pride Training will be delivered in full via remote technology

OFFICE OF RESOURCE FAMILIES LICENSING

SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS FOR RESOURCE AND KINSHIP FAMILY APPLICATIONS IN PROCESS PRIOR TO MARCH 19, 2020 ONLY

5-2M AND APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED PRIOR TO MARCH 19, 2020

5-2m forms can be completed and emailed to OOL. The timeframe for applications to be completed within six months of the home study submission to OOL has been relaxed to 12 months, unless the family has relocated.

REFERENCES FOR HOME STUDIES SUBMITTED PRIOR TO MARCH 19, 2020

- **Personal References** – the timeframe for personal references has been extended to 18 months.
- **Employment References** – the timeframe for employment references has been extended to 18 months.
- **School/Daycare References** – the timeframe for school/daycare references has been extended to 12 months. Current report cards can be utilized as a reference.
- **Child Care References** – the timeframe for childcare references has been relaxed to 12 months.
- **Medical References** - all medical references must be current within 12 months of the submission of the home study as this is a federal requirement.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

All work surrounding the assessment and documentation of the resource applicants' financial status is to continue. The assessment of finances is to be included within the body of the home study. Special attention is to be made to families impacted by COVID-19 and what benefits are being utilized during this time.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

- CARI/ADAM WALSH/CIC checks – the timeframe is extended to within 15 months of the home study submission to OOL
- Fingerprints – the timeframe is extended to within 15 months of the home study submission to OOL. Fingerprint results must be mailed to OOL per federal requirements.
- Local Police Checks – Police collaterals are expected to be gathered in writing.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN THE FIELD

The Departments safety efforts continue intact with the eight DCF Safety Advisors assigned to cover specific areas of the state. These Safety Advisors continue to be available to facilitate virtual safety workshops for staff, consult with local law enforcement and triage issues on the behalf of CP&P staff. They also can participate in virtual staff/unit meetings to provide education on safety tips.

Additional efforts around safety include the statewide deployment of Alert Media, a safe signal application that allows staff the ability to immediately notify the need for law enforcement assistance in life-threatening situations. Activation of the SafeSignal application sends an automated alert to an AlertMedia call center operator, that will then contact local law enforcement to relay information such as staff's name, GPS location, physical address, and physical description of staff member. Staff are encouraged to utilize the safe signal application every time they are out in the field.

RESOURCES

- ❖ For IT related issues including phones contact: njspirithelpdesk@dcf.nj.gov
- ❖ [Guidance](#) On The Contact Of A Close Or Casual Contact Of A Confirmed or Suspected Case of COVID-19 (attached)
- ❖ [Safe Signals](#)