

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS COVID-19

FOR FAMILIES

1. I am feeling sad or anxious. What can I do?

The outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. Coping effectively with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Some steps you can take to support yourself and your family include:

- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or [meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.](#)
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.

Some additional resources on managing your mental health during the COVID-19 may be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html> [Recommendations from the CDC.](#)

2. To receive a regional center-funded service in an alternative location or remotely, do I need to obtain approval from the regional center?

No. However, prior to, or no later than seven days after the delivery of a service in an alternate location or by remote electronic communications, the service provider must notify the regional center that you requested and/or agreed to either receive services in an alternate location or through remote electronic communication in lieu of in-person services. See the Department's March 18, 2020 [directive for more information.](#)

For additional questions and answers, please view the [Frequently Asked Questions for Individuals and Families.](#)

3. My minor or adult child is at home without his/her usual day program, school, ABA, etc. and I need help. What services are available to help me?

If your day program or school closes, or if your regional center services are impacted due to the COVID-19 outbreak, please contact your service coordinator to discuss options for additional services and supports based on your individual needs. You can also talk to your service coordinator about receiving services in an alternative way, for example remote electronic communications like telehealth.

4. Can Regional Center's purchase educational services for children over age three during the school closure caused by a COVID-19 outbreak?

For regional center eligible consumers, an exemption may be granted on an individual basis in extraordinary circumstances to permit the purchase of educational services. For more information see, [WIC 4648.5](#).

Providers are encouraged to consider all options to continue to provide services to support consumers, families, and residential providers. However, providers need to consider necessary and appropriate options that align with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state guidelines, and local county public health recommendations.

The California Department of Education's website has more information regarding educational services at:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/coronavirus.asp>

5. Can I file a complaint during the COVID-19 outbreak if I feel my child's rights have been violated or I have a complaint about my regional center or service provider?

Yes. There are several methods to help you resolve a complaint against the regional center, developmental center or a service provider.

Consumer Rights Complaint

As a representative, if you believe that an individual's rights have been wrongly or unfairly denied by the regional center, developmental center or a service provider, you may file a complaint (Welfare and Institution Code [Section 4731](#)). To file a complaint, send the completed Welfare and Institutions Code Section 4731 Complaint form (DS 255 [English](#) | [Spanish](#)) or submit a signed and dated letter to the [regional center](#) or [developmental center](#) director that you are filing a complaint against.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, regional centers and developmental centers will provide a written response to you within 40 working days.

Early Start Complaint

Parents or any individual, agency or organization may file an Early Start complaint. The complaint may be filed against DDS, California Department of Education, any regional center, local education agency, or any private service provider receiving Early Start funds. For more information, please visit: <https://www.dds.ca.gov/general/appeals-complaints-comments/early-start-complaint-process/>

Whistleblower Complaint

You may file a Whistleblower complaint about improper regional center or vendor/contractor activity. For more information on Whistleblower complaints, please visit: <https://www.dds.ca.gov/general/appeals-complaints-comments/regional-center-or-vendor-contractor-whistleblower-complaints/>

Citizen Complaint

To file a general complaint against the regional center or service provider, you may file a Citizen Complaint. To access the Citizen Complaint form in English please visit: https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CCA_DS2007_20190312.pdf

For Spanish, please visit: https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CCA_DS2007Esp_20190312.pdf

Fair Hearings

Disagreements about services, eligibility or any decision or action taken by the regional center or developmental center with which you disagree may be appealed through the fair hearing process. For more information, please visit: [Fair Hearings Complaint Process: CA Department of Developmental Services](#).

If you have questions about filing any complaint or fair hearing, please contact: Appeals, Complaints & Projects Section

Department of Developmental Services
1600 9th Street, Room 340 (MS 3-12)
Sacramento, CA 95814
Voice: (916) 651-6309
Fax (916) 654-3641

6. As part of the Family Cost Participation Program, I have a parental fee. Do I still need to pay the fee?

No. Per the DDS Directive [02-032520](#), the requirements for Family Cost Participation Program and Annual Family Program Fee have been waived. Retroactive to March 12, 2020, regional centers shall not conduct assessments and families shall not be required to pay costs or fees associated with these programs.

7. Are regional centers still making individuals eligible for services during COVID-19 if they can't do in-person meetings?

Yes. Per the DDS Directive dated [March 12, 2020](#), any requirement for in-person meetings to determine regional center eligibility are waived for individuals three years or older.

If the regional center is reasonably certain of eligibility but is unable to make a final decision about eligibility without an in-person meeting, the regional center can decide someone is "presumptively" eligible. That means the person would be eligible for services but will need to be reassessed for eligibility when an in-person meeting is possible. Your local regional center can explain this to you during the intake and assessment process.

8. I am struggling to find and access food. Where can I get help?

If you are struggling to get access to food, talk to your regional center service coordinator. They can assist you in applying for CalFresh food benefits. CalFresh is for people with low income or recipients of SSI/SSP. If you are found eligible CalFresh issues monthly electronic benefits that can be used to buy most foods at many markets and food stores.

To find more information about CalFresh visit: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/food-nutrition/calfresh> or call the information line at: 1-877-847-3663.

To find local resources in your community like food pantries, meal delivery services, and public benefits like CalFresh and WIC visit <http://211.org/> or dial 211 on your phone and talk to an operator that can help you find information on local food options.

For additional questions and answers, please view the [Frequently Asked Questions for Individuals and Families](#).