



Quarterly Update

FALL 2020

CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL UPDATE

Children's Residential Licensing Program Mission:

To protect and improve the lives of all youth who reside in a community care facility through the administration of a transparent licensing system that is collaborative, fair, and supportive of families.

A Note from Pamela Dickfoss, Deputy Director

Welcome to our Fall 2020 Children's Residential Program (CRP) Quarterly Update. As the global health crisis caused by COVID-19 evolves, we here at the Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) continue to work with our statewide network of committed professionals to ensure that you are able to provide the necessary shelter, care, and services to the vulnerable children and young adults in your charge.

We have already published more [Provider Information Notices \(PINs\)](#) this year than we have in past years, and to better assist the public our team has been providing technical assistance on both COVID-19-related and other matters nonstop. To further ensure you have the latest information, guidance, and resources possible CRP has promulgated revisions to regulations to incorporate the provisions of Senate Bill (SB) 484 (Beall), Chapter 540, Statutes of 2015 regarding psychotropic medications. These regulations impact Group Homes, Foster Family Homes, and Small Family Homes. These same provisions have been or will be amended in the Department's Interim Licensing Standards (ILS) for Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs) and Foster Family Agencies (FFAs). (See [PIN 20-15-CRP.](#))

We released the latest [STRTP ILS Version 3.1](#) on September 16th and as of October 7th the [YHPC ILS Version 2](#) (Youth Homelessness Prevention Center – formerly, Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelter) has been released and is in effect, the please be sure to take time to review these updates. Additional ILS updates will also be released in the coming months including the FFA ILS Ver. 5. Please be sure to keep an eye on your emails as PINs will be released when the next ILS updates are published. You can find a current list of the various [ILS versions here.](#)

As we are facing another fire season we ask that all Californians check Cal Fire's [Ready for Wildfire website](#) with advice on wildfire preparedness, steps for safe evacuation, and to sign up for wildfire alerts.

This fall will undoubtedly be different from those in the past as we explore new territory with distance learning – a challenge that I have no doubt our families, teaching professionals, county staff, and youth are ready to take on. Once again, all of us as CRP thank you for your hard work and commitment to the state's most vulnerable Californians. We could not do this great work without you.

Finally, I want to let you know I have decided to retire as of the first of December. For the past six years, my heart and soul has been focused on the leadership of this extraordinary program that plays a significant role in the health and safety of infants through the elderly. It has been an honor to work with such a dedicated group of providers and stakeholders. These collaborations have been essential in establishing partnerships and a continuous dialogue on how to improve the quality of care in our licensed facilities.

Thank you for your perseverance and tireless work on behalf of all the individuals we serve. I am reassured my current leadership will continue to collaborate with providers, advocates, residents and families to protect the vulnerable Californians we serve. Your spirit and resilience have lifted me up during challenging situations. I am forever grateful to have been able to serve as the Deputy Director of Community Care Licensing and wish you all luck in the wonderful work you do.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
Preparing for the Holidays	Expanded Injection Permissions to Include Trained Group Home Staff
Physical Distancing and Social Isolation	Lead Poisoning in Children
Planned Activities and Maintaining Safety	Required Self-Assessment for Providers Vendorized with Regional Centers
Transporting Youth	CBCB Guardian Update
Practicing Self-Care	Provider Information Notices (PINs)

Preparing for the Holidays

“Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall.” – F. Scott Fitzgerald

With COVID-19 impacting all aspects of our lives, the approaching holiday seasons are no exception. Our need to adapt our holiday celebrations to meet local and state public health recommendations as well as taking general safety precautions remains imperative. Here are some additional tips for the upcoming holidays.



Halloween Safety Tips for Dressing Up ([CDC website](#))

- Swords, knives, and other costume accessories should be short, soft, and flexible
- Always test make-up in a small area first. Remove it before bedtime
- Fasten reflective tape to costumes and bags to help drivers see you
- Lower your risk for serious eye injury by not wearing decorative contact lenses
- Wear well-fitting masks, costumes, and shoes to avoid blocked vision, trips, and falls
- Be sure to wear flame-resistant costumes

Food Safety Tips for Your Holiday Turkey ([CDC website](#))

- Thaw Your Turkey Safely
- Handle Your Turkey the Right Way
- Cook Stuffing Thoroughly
- Cook Your Turkey Thoroughly



Preparing for Your First Holiday Season as a Foster Family

Here are some quick tips for foster care families and organizations going into the holiday season:

- Make sure to talk to your foster youth before the holidays kick off
- Pay close attention to their feelings and mental health and address any changes observed as needed
- It's important to include their traditions and customs into the family's practices
- Invite other members of their wider community, if able to do so safely
- Ensure the foster youth feel welcome in your new family traditions



Physical Distancing and Social Isolation

Many holidays and milestones have already been missed due to COVID-19 and many of us are missing the people we can't be with in person right now. We are now approaching a season marked by more holidays and children and youth will want to gather with family and friends to celebrate. Separation from loved ones during the holidays can create negative effects and when people are placed in physically isolating environments the impacts of loneliness and social isolation can become worse.

The Centers for Disease Control ([CDC](#)) states that public health measures, such as social distancing, can make people feel further isolated and lonely and increase stress and anxiety. However, these measures are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to keep children, youth, family and staff safe.

Many of the populations that our providers serve are vulnerable during a public health crisis. Children and teens and those who have pre-existing mental health or underlying medical conditions may respond more strongly to the stressors related to a public health crisis and physical distancing practices.

Signs of social isolation can vary with each individual, but some of the most common ones include:

- Loss of interest in things they enjoyed before
- Change in mood or emotional instability
- Isolating in room
- Anxiety

It is also important to pay close attention to those children and youth who may be shy by nature or tend to keep their feelings hidden. Indications of difficulties may not be as noticeable in persons with these types of traits.

The following resources are provided to help your staff address social isolation in your facility during this public health crisis:

- Mayo Clinic – [Helping kids cope with the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- 1 in 5 Minds – [Social Isolation in Children at Home or at School: What You Can Do to Help](#)
- Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness Now – [COVID-19 and Social Isolation Resources](#)

Planned Activities and Maintaining Safety

The holiday season is a time when the loss of being away from family or loved ones can be more deeply felt by children and youth. Restrictions to visitations and other safety steps taken in response to COVID-19 can make this holiday season particularly challenging. This is a good time for caregivers to plan activities for children and youth in a way that keeps them safe but also continuously engaged and connected to those significant to them.

Adjustments will need to be made regarding how communal activities are handled in order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. The need to maintain social distancing, limiting the number of participants at each event, and ensuring the physical isolation of those who are sick will determine what these activities look like and how they are to be carried out.

Caregivers are required to provide planned activities for children and youth. The health restrictions due to COVID-19 place an added challenge for creative but doable ways to offer planned activities. Below, are four considerations in planning activities:

- Provide activities that match the interests and developmental abilities of the children and youth; avoid a “one-size-fits-all” approach, however simpler or convenient.
- Enrich daily interactions with children and youth by turning them into opportunities to engage in “mini-activities,” such as short chats, puzzles, or word association games.
- Turn activities already scheduled, such as meals, chores, and exercise, into further opportunities for active sharing, exchange of ideas, or storytelling.
- Electronics can play an important role in helping children and youth stay in touch with loved ones, but they should not take the place of regular communal interaction.

The following is a list of additional resources on this subject from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**:

[Keep Children Healthy during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

[Back to School Planning: Checklists to Guide Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers](#)

Transporting Youth

Providers have the responsibility to ensure the health and safety of children and youth in care at all times. This includes when transporting them to and from school, activities or appointments. Below are important safety reminders and suggestions when providers are transporting children:

- Vehicle must be in good condition
- The driver must be at least 18 years old with valid driver’s license for the type of vehicle that is used to transport children
- Driver must be covered under the vehicle’s insurance
- Never exceed the seating capacity of the vehicle
- Ensure that seat belts are operational and properly fastened
 - Ensure that infant car seats/booster seats are properly installed
- Never leave children/youth unsupervised in parked vehicles
- Always maintain appropriate supervision while in the vehicle:
 - Watch and listen to what children/youth are doing
 - Eliminate distractions while you are driving
 - Minimize phone calls. Using a hands-free device is still a distraction
 - Calls should be for emergencies only

- Be prepared for emergencies. At a minimum:
 - Carry emergency contact information and a disaster supply kit in the vehicle
 - Have clear transition of responsibility guidelines
 - Discuss where to gather, who to deliver the children/youth to, and what to do in emergencies (i.e., child not present at waiting location, flat tire, etc.)
 - Maintain daily log of children and youth's names, time and place they were dropped off or picked up, etc.
- Due to Covid-19, take precautions to protect staff and residents from transmission of any viruses while on an outing:
 - Only transport persons from the same facility (or household)
 - Make sure all staff and residents are wearing face coverings
 - Clean/sanitize the vehicle between each trip
- Remember to have proper supervision for children or youth who remain at the facility

You might consider having staff who transport children take Defensive Driver Training at the State of California, [Department of General Services](#) website.

The following are some additional resources: [Disability & Mobility Resources and Purchasing a Mobility Vehicle](#)



Practicing Self-Care

The concept of “self-care” refers to the action of meeting one’s own needs to ensure physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It is important to give yourself mental health breaks to ensure that you are rebooting your energy levels and paying attention to your immediate needs. Self-care practices can include things such as taking deep breaths during a stressful situation, taking a walk, meditating, exercising, reading a book, having a conversation with a friend/loved one, etc.

There are many ways in which someone can practice self-care and it is important to be mindful of your body, emotions, and mental state. Particularly during a public health crisis such as COVID-19, it is especially important that you practice self-care in order to reduce the likelihood of burn out. Life stressors are normal and common, but you should always take care of yourself and take breaks whenever needed.

The following links are helpful resources to provide additional information to better understand the importance of self-care:

- [California Surgeon General’s Playbook: Stress Relief](#)
- [Self-Care – Active Minds](#)
- [Taking Good Care of Yourself – Mental Health America](#)

- [Mayo Clinic Health System](#)



Expanded Injection Permissions to Include Trained Group Home Staff

Effective January 1, 2020, Assembly Bill (AB) 819 (Stats. 2019, Ch. 777, Sec. 2) amended the provisions in Health and Safety Code (HSC), Section 1507.25 to add trained group home staff to the list of specified individuals allowed to administer prescribed injections to a foster child in placement. Specifically, the provisions authorizing specified persons who are not licensed health care professionals to administer subcutaneous injections of prescribed medications to foster children and nonminor dependents in placement, were updated to include group home staff who provide direct care and supervision.

All persons authorized under this section to administer injections, including group home staff, must be trained by a licensed health care professional practicing within their scope of practice. The licensed health care professional shall periodically review, correct, or update training provided pursuant to this section as the professional deems necessary and appropriate.

The Children's Residential Program (CRP) will adopt regulations and interim licensing standards (ILS), as applicable, to support implementation of HSC, [Section 1507.25](#). These regulations and ILS are currently in development.

Note that the provisions of HSC, [Section 1507.25](#) do not supersede requirements regarding the administration of psychotropic medications pursuant to [Section 369.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code](#).

Lead Poisoning in Children

Lead exposure is still a very real problem and protecting children from exposure is important to good health. Long term exposure can interfere with a child's mental and physical development and it can also lead to behavior and learning problems later in life. The most common way children get lead poisoning is from lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust from older buildings. Buildings constructed before 1978 are at higher risk for contamination and should be tested for lead. Other sources of lead contamination can come from air, water and soil.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the goal is to prevent childhood lead exposure before any harm occurs. The CDC recommends the removal of lead hazards from the environment before a child is exposed. This is the most effective way to ensure that children do not experience harmful long-term effects of lead exposure. A blood test is the best way to measure exposure and it is essential to follow-up with children who already may be exposed to lead so they can receive the care needed to improve their overall health outcomes.

For more information, visit the [California Department of Public Health - Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch \(CLPPB\)](#) to get more information about prevention and testing to keep your child safe and healthy.

Required Self-Assessment for Providers Vendorized with Regional Centers

In 2014, the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#) issued requirements known as the [Home and Community-Based Services \(HCBS\) Final Rule](#). The purpose of the HCBS Final Rule is to improve the quality of HCBS and to provide additional protections to people receiving services, including Regional Center clients. The [CMS Final Rule deadline](#) for compliance has been extended until **March 17, 2023**.

The HCBS Final Rule was put in place to make sure that individuals have full access to the benefits of community living and the opportunity to receive services in the most personalized and relevant way possible. It takes a person-centered approach that pays close attention to the quality of each individual's experience in receiving services.

Care providers vendorized with the Regional Center to deliver services designed for groups of individuals with developmental disabilities were required to complete a self-assessment. The self-assessment seeks to measure their current level of compliance with the HCBS Final Rule. For providers who have not yet completed the Self-Assessment, it is very important that you begin this process as soon as possible as you are beyond the timeframe for completion (this should have been completed by [August 31, 2020](#)). It is not necessary to complete the entire HCBS Self-Assessment at one time, however, you will want to allow yourself plenty of time to gather needed information. Access is available on the [HCBS Self-Assessment website](#).

If you have any questions about the CMS Final Rule or HCBS Self-Assessment process, please reach out to your local Regional Center's Home and Community Based Services Specialist. Providers who have already completed their HCBS Self-Assessments do not need to take any further action at this time.

CBCB Guardian System

The Caregiver Background Check Bureau (CBCB) is pleased to announce the launch of the background check system, *Guardian*, set to go live this Fall.

Guardian is a tool to assist agencies and applicants in the background check process. *Guardian* will ensure background checks are completed faster and more efficiently, while making the process easier for applicants and agencies to request exemptions.

A Licensee User Access form has been sent to all licensee mailing addresses, to create a unique *Guardian* user account. The Licensee User Access form will ensure only authorized users have the appropriate access to *Guardian*.

[PIN 20-20-CCLD](#) has guidance for providers on how to access *Guardian* and gives an introduction of the agency functionality in *Guardian*.

For additional information regarding *Guardian*, please visit the [CBCB Webpage](#).

Provider Information Notices (PINS)

The CRP continues to publish Provider Information Notices (PIN) to inform our providers on the latest updates in the program, which are posted on the Community Care Licensing Division's (CCLD) webpage. Please remember to continue to check CCLD's webpage or subscribe for new PINS. Anyone can subscribe to be on the distribution list to receive information from any of the licensing programs (Adult and Senior Care, Child Care Advocate Program, and Children's Residential Program). To sign up, go directly to the [CCLD website](#) and click on [Receive Important Updates](#). You may also refer to [PIN 19-09-CCLD](#) for more information on how to subscribe.

Most Recent PINS Published include:

- [PIN 20-19-CRP](#) - Clarification of the State's Face Covering Order in Children's Residential Facilities
- [PIN 20-18-CRP](#) - Food and Drug Administration Safety Notice Regarding Hand Sanitizers Containing Methanol
- [PIN 20-17-CRP](#) - New Background Check Requirements, Assembly Bill 819 (Chapter 777, Statutes of 2019)
- [PIN 20-16-CRP](#) - Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Resources and Training for Children's Residential Licensees
- [PIN 20-15-CRP](#) - Regulations for Oversight of Psychotropic Medication Use in Children's Residential Facilities Published ORD #0118-01



Are you interested in becoming part of the Community Care Licensing team?

Please apply at: [CalCareers](#)

Information on how to apply for a State job can be found at the [Cal Career website](#).

IMPORTANT INFO AND PHONE NUMBERS

Centralized Complaint Information Bureau (CCIB)	1-844-538-8766
Foster Care Rates	916-651-9152
Caregiver Background Check Bureau (CBCB)	1-888-422-5669
Foster Care Ombudsman	1-877-846-1602
CCL Public Inquiry and Response	916-651-8848
Technical Support Program	916-654-1541

Program Administrator:

Jean Chen

Assistant Program Administrators:

Angela Carmack – North

Lenora Scott – South