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COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT URGES RESIDENTS TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE

In recent weeks, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has been a leading voice in calling attention to the dangers that children face while home and out of the line of sight of mandated reporters like teachers, counselors and medical personnel.

Now, more than ever, DCFS is committed to strengthening its partnerships with other county departments to meet the needs of vulnerable families.

DCFS continues to partner with law enforcement to ensure the safety and well-being of children which requires real-time collaboration with social workers in the field to respond to emergency reports of child abuse and domestic violence, cross reporting allegations of child abuse and sharing information to better understand family dynamics.

Collaboration with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) also is vital to provide critical mental health services to families through the joint assessment and provision of treatment services to children and youth. This also includes the delivery of specialized foster care services by DCFS-DMH staff for youth with intensive mental health needs.

DCFS also continues to work with the Department of Public Health and public health nurses to connect children and families with telehealth and medical resources.

The department is committed to working closely with county partners and other allies in the child welfare community to promote innovative methods that ensure the safety of children during this pandemic and beyond.

The department has been actively engaged in a robust public information campaign whereby residents have been called to make an investment into the welfare of families in our communities by reporting abuse or neglect to the county's Child Protection Hotline (1-800-540-4000).

To further advance this initiative, DCFS has issued a new public service announcement in English and Spanish aimed at generating greater awareness of how community members can get involved. The two-minute PSA will run on Ch. 36 and may also be viewed on Facebook ([facebook.com/lacountydcfs](https://www.facebook.com/lacountydcfs)) and Twitter ([@lacountydcfs](https://twitter.com/lacountydcfs)).

"LA County's most vulnerable families are under immense stress," DCFS Chief Deputy Director Ginger Pryor, who is featured in the video message, said. "Pressures deriving from school closures and limited childcare options, fewer social connections and stressful mental health

"The rising unemployment rate, mounting financial obligations and food insecurity, also are among the challenges placing families at greater risk," she added. "We need the help of observant friends and neighbors to ensure children remain in safe and healthy environments."

"Our department remains committed to supporting families during these challenging times." Chief Deputy Director Pryor said. "We've invested nearly \$20 million in prevention and aftercare services since our last fiscal year to help strengthen families by imparting knowledge and skills for successful parenting. This includes introducing families to core competencies like child development, parental resilience and social connections."

Social workers rely on mandated reporters to initiate contact when neglect or abuse are suspected. With this safety net no longer in place, DCFS is urging Los Angeles County residents to help social workers prevent child abuse before it happens.

On average, the county's Child Protection Hotline receives about 1,000 daily reports. In recent weeks, however, there has been a decline in calls of up to 50 percent

This is deeply concerning to the department and it is not an issue for social workers alone. In a county of 10 million inhabitants, DCFS needs every resident to be attentive and watchful to ensure children remain safe at home.

Click [here](#) to view DCFS' public service announcement in English or [here](#) to view it in Spanish.

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About the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) promotes child safety and well-being by partnering with communities to strengthen families, keeping children at home whenever possible, and connecting them with stable, loving homes in times of need. As the largest child protective services agency in the nation, DCFS is responsible for ensuring the safety of more than two million children across 88 diverse cities in Los Angeles County.

Established in 1984 to keep children safe and support families in crisis, it is one of the 35 Los Angeles County Departments governed by the five-member Board of Supervisors with nearly 9,000 staff across 20 regional offices, specialized bureaus, and administration that cover a broad array of services and programs. The department is led by Director Bobby D. Cagle - a former foster child and longtime social worker. For more information, visit

<http://dcfs.lacounty.gov>.



County of Los Angeles, Chief Executive Office, Office of Emergency Management

For questions, please contact the L.A. County Joint Information Center - COVID-19
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