

COVID-19 AND RETURN HOME

The unique circumstances presented by COVID-19 may have GALs proactively considering return home and/or responding to parents' motions for return home. This resource page provides additional considerations that may be helpful during COVID-19 and concludes with a few general safety resources.

The Child's Basic Needs During COVID-19

- What does the child understand about **COVID-19 and COVID-19-related recommendations and restrictions**? Is the child able to follow the COVID-19-related recommendations and restrictions?
 - What does the parent understand about **COVID-19 and COVID-19-related recommendations** and restrictions?
 - Is parent able to help the child understand such things?
 - Is the parent able to follow COVID-19-related recommendations and restrictions?
 - What assistance is needed in this area?
- Does the parent have **adequate cleaning supplies, hand soap, and/or sanitizer**? What assistance is needed in this area?
- Will the child have **safe housing** given the COVID-19-related recommendations and restrictions? What assistance is needed in this area?
- Will parent be able to provide **adequate food** if the child is returned home? What assistance is needed in this area?
- Do any adults **work outside the home**?
 - Is anyone in the home at high risk for exposure?
 - Does the family have a plan to mitigate risks to other family members?
 - What assistance is needed in this area?
- Is **childcare** needed?
 - Is appropriate childcare currently available for the child?
 - What assistance is needed in this area?
- Does the parent have access to **medical care**? What assistance is needed in this area?
- Is the parent able to meet the child's **educational needs**? What assistance is needed in this area?

- Will the child and the parent have a **reliable means of communication if issues arise**?
 - Should the child and/or parent be provided a list of names and numbers to call or text if concerns arise? Examples could include 911, the department caseworker, the GAL, the GAL's case consultant, and/or service providers.
 - Does the child or parent need assistance in entering those names and numbers directly into a telephone?
 - Does the child and the parent have a way to charge the telephone?
 - What assistance is needed in this area?

Maintaining Child Safety During COVID-19

- What contact between the child and/or parent and professionals is necessary to **ensure the child's ongoing safety**?
 - Should the parent and/or child be required to contact someone on a regular basis such as once or twice a week?
 - Who should the child and/or parent be required to contact - the caseworker, the GAL, or others?
 - Does the parent understand these expectations?
 - Is the parent able to follow through with these expectations or should professionals initiate the contact?
- What **services are the parent currently required to do**? Have those services been arranged and/or modified due to COVID-19? Does the parent have the technology necessary to meaningfully participate in those services?
- What **services are the child currently required to do**? Have those services been arranged and/or modified due to COVID-19? Does the parent have the technology necessary for the child to meaningfully participate in those services?
- Will any **additional services** be needed for the child or parent if the child returns home? Have those services been arranged and/or modified due to COVID-19? Does the parent have the technology necessary for the parent and/or child to meaningfully participate in those services?

General Child Safety Resources

Child Safety: A Guide for Judges and Attorneys ("Child Safety Guide")

https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/child_law/child-safety-guide.pdf is an excellent resource. Two key premises of the Child Safety Guide are:

1. a child is unsafe when threats of danger exist within a family, the child is vulnerable to such threats, and the parent has/parents have insufficient protective capacities to control/manage such threats; and
2. safety assessments involve gathering necessary information, analyzing such information to assess child safety, and analyzing such information to plan for child safety.

GALS can access a tool for conducting safety assessments consistent with the Child Safety Guide on OCR's Litigation Toolkit <https://coloradochildrep.org/attorney-center/litigation-toolkit/>.

Additionally, GALs might find pages 48-49 of the Child Safety Guide https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/child_law/child-safety-guide.pdf particularly helpful, as these pages outline the information judicial officers require when considering return home.