



Memorandum

To: Child Welfare Staff

From: Mary Havick, Deputy Division Director of Child Welfare

Date: May 11, 2021

Re: COVID-19 Vaccination for Children and Youth in DFCS Custody

As access to the COVID-19 vaccine continues to increase, it is important that we are consistent in our approach to the vaccination of children and youth in our care. The vaccine is now available to children and youth starting at 12 years old and older (with Pfizer-BioNTech currently the only vaccine approved for children and youth 12 to 18 years old).

Our approach to the authorization of children and youth to be vaccinated for COVID-19 includes the following considerations:

- If a child and youth 12 years or older is in our temporary custody, the Division will need permission/consent from the parent(s) in order to proceed with a COVID-19 vaccination.
- If a child and youth 12 years or older is in our permanent custody, the Division is able to grant permission/consent to proceed with a COVID vaccination. This consent should be at the local county level.

If there is any question regarding legal status, the county SAAG or Regional Permanency Field Program Specialists can be reached for guidance and clarification.

As with adults, the COVID-19 vaccine is encouraged but not mandatory for children and youth. Division staff should speak with children and youth and their parents/caretakers about the vaccine and respect their judgement and decision regarding whether to get vaccinated or not. For questionable situations, the child or youth's pediatrician should be contacted for advice. The following websites provide valuable information to share as part of any COVID-19 discussion:

New Press Release: <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-authorizes-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-emergency-use>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/symptoms.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/index.html>
<https://www.webmd.com/vaccines/covid-19-vaccine/news/20210215/when-will-kids-get-covid-vaccines>

As noted in the WebMD link, "Until [children / youth] can get vaccinated, [parents / caretakers] should protect their children from COVID-19 by continuing to practice prevention measures, such as wearing face masks, maintaining safe physical distance from others and by practicing appropriate hand hygiene."