



Dear CASAs,

The Coronavirus and its potential impact on our community – including the children we serve, our volunteers, and our staff – is of great concern to us at Voices for Children, and we are closely monitoring the situation both locally and nationally.

As the Coronavirus situation continues to develop, we wanted to reach out to keep you apprised of Voices for Children's planning, share local developments that may affect your case children, and provide resources that may be helpful to you.

We have been in close communication with officials in San Diego County's courts and various agencies to remain apprised of their plans. **Most important, they have asked that, as of today, all CASAs and VFC staff refrain from attending any court hearings until March 31, 2020. We will notify you if the court extends the restriction beyond the end of this month.** If you have a court hearing coming up, your Advocacy Supervisor will be in touch with you. There may be opportunities for those ordered to return to court to participate by telephone. You, as a CASA, may reach out to the minor's attorney to request to be called prior to the start of the hearing.

In addition to taking care of your own health and following nationally recognized guidelines to prevent the spread of illness, we wanted to provide you with recommendations to best conduct your role as a CASA during this time.

- Moving forward, please refrain from in-person CASA-related meetings or visits, including with your case children. Please take extra care during this time to explain to your case children why you aren't able to meet. Consider finding other creative ways to maintain your connection.
- Prioritize good communication with those on your case, especially your case children. Get creative with technology - phone, FaceTime, Skype - to maintain your connection or attend meetings if relevant. As always, stay in contact with your Advocacy Supervisor on any case issues.

- To the best of your ability, it is important for the well being of our children that you continue to complete your court reports and submit them to reports@speakupnow.org with your Advocacy Supervisor cc'd.
- Beginning Monday, March 16, the majority of Voices for Children staff will be working remotely. You will still be able to reach your Advocacy Supervisor via email and their same phone number, so don't hesitate to reach out to them with any questions. In addition, we ask that CASAs refrain from visiting the VFC office until further notice.
- Since we have encouraged our staff to not work and take care of themselves if they are sick, please be aware that you may be directed to or contacted by other members of our team if your Advocacy Supervisor is unavailable. Each and every member of our team is highly qualified and will gladly support you.
- If you have a case child over the age of 10 who has an upcoming hearing, there may be an opportunity for them to attend the hearing by phone. You can help make this possible by notifying the minor's attorney if your child is interested in participating in this way.

Here are a few of the key steps we have taken to ensure Voices for Children is prepared moving forward:

- As mentioned above, the majority of VFC staff will be working remotely beginning Monday, March 16.
- In-person events, such as small group meetings, continuing education programs, Advocate University training, and Real Word panel presentations are being postponed or cancelled through the end of March. All other events will be evaluated as the situation continues to develop.
- We have updated our Business Continuity Plan so we will be able to respond quickly and efficiently in the event that we are required to make additional changes to our business operations. This plan includes communication with you, our CASA volunteers, to ensure you receive as much advance notice as possible should any changes occur.
- We are staying in close communication with officials in San Diego County's courts and various agencies to remain apprised of their plans moving forward.

We will continue to update you and communicate additional information as it becomes available. In the meantime, we encourage you to stay in communication with your Advocacy Supervisor.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our children, and for your concern for the health and safety of our broader community. We hope you are well and

that you are able to take good care of yourselves and your loved ones. You mean so much to us and to the children in our community.

Sincerely,



Kelly Douglas
President & CEO
Voices for Children

RESOURCES

[CDC Coronavirus Information](#)
[California Department of Public Health COVID-19 Updates](#)
[San Diego County Coronavirus Information](#)
[Live Well San Diego Coronavirus FAQs](#)

STAY CONNECTED

