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Date: December 20, 2021
To: All DCS Staff
From: Sarah Sailors, Deputy Director of Field Operations
Subject: COVID-19 Vaccinations for Children 5 to 11 Years of Age
DCS-21-22

This administrative letter supersedes and replaces the previous version that was released on December 6, 2021.

This administrative letter is intended to provide information to Department of Child Services (DCS) employees about Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccination eligibility as it relates to children under the care of DCS who are between 5 and 11 years of age.

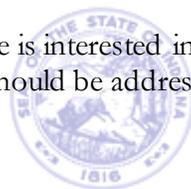
COVID-19 is defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as “a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.” The CDC, through the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), has approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (marketed as COMIRNATY) for those children 5 to 11 years of age. The vaccination is two (2) shots administered 21 days apart.

As a matter of policy and practice, DCS does not mandate that children in our care receive the COVID-19 vaccine. DCS staff should guide parents interested in having their 5 to 11 year old vaccinated against COVID-19 to reputable sites such as the [Indiana Department of Health](http://www.in.gov/health) website, for more information. All parties involved in a case should have a voice in the decision. Each Child and Family Team (CFT) should work closely together to determine the way to proceed that is in the best interest of the child.

For children who are post-Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) and eligible for the vaccine, DCS staff should consult with the child’s primary care physician for their recommendation and share this information at a Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM). The CFT should then work closely together to determine the way to proceed that is in the best interest of the child.

If parents of children with an In-Home Child in Need of Services (CHINS) case express interest in having their eligible 5 to 11 year old vaccinated against COVID-19, DCS staff will guide them to the [Indiana Department of Health](http://www.in.gov/health) website.

If a party to an Out-of-Home CHINS case is interested in having an eligible 5 to 11 year old child vaccinated against COVID-19, the issue should be addressed at a CFTM to determine the best way



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to proceed for the child with the input of the parent(s). If the CFT decides that it is in the best interest of the child to be vaccinated against COVID-19, DCS staff should make efforts to secure parental consent before proceeding.

Thank you for supporting our children and their health.

Sincerely,

Sarah Sailors, MSW

Sarah Sailors



Protecting our children, families and future