



To: Judges, Magistrates, and Court Administrators

From: Kimberly L. Hall, Director
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Date: March 20, 2020

Re: LIMITED ABILITY TO PLACE CHILDREN

Our Public Children Services Agencies (PCSA) urgently need your partnership in best supporting the safety of children during this critical time. Staffing concerns have necessitated that placement agencies (residential treatment centers, group homes, shelter care facilities) discontinue new admissions of children. PCSAs are following guidance from public health authorities, the Centers for Disease Control and the Ohio Department of Health, regarding the COVID-19 outbreak.

Placement agencies do not have staff to ensure the safety and treatment needs of children. With this new development, PCSAs now have very limited placement resources for children. As children are brought into their care and custody, PCSAs are at high risk of having no placement for them. Teens are most impacted by this concern; especially teens in juvenile detention facilities. Please consider this when making decisions about child custody, removal, and discharges. This is a critical matter that can only be solved through a cooperative partnership among all of us making critical decisions involving children and their safety.

We appreciate your continued partnership and support as we navigate this unprecedented time. If you have specific questions, please contact Tequilla Washington at Tequilla.Washington@jfs.ohio.gov