

**COVID-19
Unified Command**

State Emergency Operations Center

www.Coronavirus.Alaska.Gov

STATE OF ALASKA



Joint Information Center

Governor Mike Dunleavy
Department of Health and Social Services
Department of Public Safety
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Families Encouraged to Create Circle of Support

Anyone caring for young children should make plans for what to do if they become ill

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The COVID-19 Unified Command highly encourages families with young children to form a Circle of Support and create a plan for what to do if the caregiver(s) in the household become ill with COVID-19 and cannot safely provide care for children. A [new resource](#), created by Alaskans for Alaska families, walks parents and caregivers through how to do this.

“One of the first questions on many parents’ minds is ‘What will I do with my kids if I get sick?’ And yet, surprisingly, there were no guidance documents on this topic from federal agencies. So, we did what Alaskans often do. We worked together with partners across to State to make it ourselves, to make it by Alaskans and for Alaskans.” – Incident Commander Heidi Hedberg with the COVID-19 Unified Command.

As the new resource explains, when creating a Circle of Support, families or households should consider the health of people that can care for children at short notice. People who are at high risk for suffering complications from COVID-19, including grandparents and close friends with underlying health issues, should be excluded from the Circle of Support for their own safety. All households should not only create a plan, but they should reach out to their select Circle of Support frequently to make sure that involved parties are healthy and still able to assist, should the need arise.

“It is important to identify people in your life who can possibly care for your children in an emergency, or if you become ill,” said Director Kristen Bierma of Safe Families for Children Alaska. “People you trust that your children are familiar with, such as aunts, uncles, or friends and neighbors, can all be considered for your Circle of Support. Having a plan in place for a seamless child care transition will remove stress and allow kids to stay in an environment that they are comfortable in.”

Plans should include “go-bags” for children consisting of:

- A written copy of the plan and contact number for each member of the Circle of Support
- At least a week’s worth of clothing
- A list of any known allergies and needed medications
- Comfort items such as a blanket and favorite stuffed animal

- A contact list with phone numbers and addresses of people the children routinely have regular communications with

Alaskans have been doing a great job of flattening the curve, but the virus is still very much a risk. No one should become complacent and be caught off guard, including families with children. The brand new resource for families can be found on the COVID19.alaska.gov website.

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