



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

1115 Washington Street, SE • P.O. Box 40983 • Olympia WA 98504-0983

June 11, 2021

To: Child Welfare Field Operations Staff

From: Darcey Hancock, Director of Field Operations

RE: REVISED Guidance for obtaining consent for children and youth in out-of-home care who are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine based on current public health guidelines.

Washington state officials, based on FDA and CDC recommendations, are making determinations regarding the ages of children and youth who are eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. As of May 13, 2021, children and youth who are 12 and older are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination(s) currently approved for their age. Caseworkers must obtain consent from parents for youth who are under 18, and must also obtain consent from youth who are 13 or older, as indicated in the attached chart, before facilitating the vaccine. In some instances, a court order will be necessary. As vaccine authorization is expanded to cover younger populations of dependent children over the coming months, this guidance will apply to all youth deemed eligible to receive the vaccine(s).

Guidance for Consent

Using the attached chart for reference, caseworkers will need to:

- During health and safety visits with children and youth and monthly visits with parents
 - Discuss eligibility for vaccines for all children and youth with parents
 - Obtain parental consent for vaccination for all children (12 and under) and youth (13 and older)
 - Discuss eligibility for vaccines with youth 13+
 - Obtain written consent from youth who are 13 and older using the attached form.
 - Some youth 13+ may not be able to give consent on their own due to incapacity or developmental disability. When in doubt, either follow the “Is youth capable of consent” guidance on the reference chart and consult with a physician regarding the youth’s capacity to give consent if needed.
 - Encourage youth and parents who have questions about vaccinations to discuss their concerns with their primary care physician (PCP) and attorney.
 - If after 6 weeks a parent cannot be reached regarding vaccine consent, and attempts to reach the parent have been documented in FamLink, proceed with obtaining a physician’s evaluation and follow recommendation regarding the child/youth’s ability to have the vaccination.
- If youth and parents, when applicable, consent to vaccine, move forward with obtaining the vaccine.

- Follow up to obtain PCP recommendations, court orders and legal consultation as needed when youth are not capable of giving consent or parents do not give consent for vaccines but youth want to be vaccinated.
- Upload signed consents and/or court order in FamLink and provide a copy of the signed consent to the out-of-home caregiver.

If you have any questions, please contact Trishia Benshoof at (360) 789-0049 or trishia.benshoof@dcyf.wa.gov.

COVID-19 Vaccine Consent Guidance for Children and Youth in Care

Legal status (for all children and youth)	Youth Consent 13+		Parent	Additional action needed	Legal action needed
	Is youth 13+ and capable of consent?	Youth			
Dependent 12 and Under	NA	NA	Consents	Facilitate vaccine	No
Dependent 12 and Under	NA	NA	Cannot be reached regarding consent	Obtain PCP recommendation regarding vaccination	Obtain Court Order if PCP recommends vaccination
Dependent 12 and Under	NA	NA	Does not consent	Do not vaccinate*	No
Dependent 13+	Yes	Consents	Consents	Facilitate vaccine	No
Dependent 13+	Yes	Does not consent	Consents	Do not vaccinate*	No
Dependent 13+	Yes	Consents	Does not consent** or cannot be reached regarding consent	Obtain PCP recommendation regarding vaccination	Obtain Court Order if PCP recommends vaccination
Dependent 13+	Yes	Does not consent	Does not consent or cannot be reached regarding consent	Do not vaccinate*	No
Dependent 13+	No	NA	Consents	Facilitate vaccine	No
Dependent 13+	No	NA	Does not consent**	Do not vaccinate*	No
Dependent 13+	No	NA	Cannot be reached regarding consent	Obtain PCP recommendation regarding vaccination	Obtain Court Order if PCP recommends vaccination
Dependent- Legally Free 12 and Under	NA	NA	NA	Obtain PCP recommendation regarding vaccination	Obtain court order if PCP recommends vaccination

COVID Vaccination for youth 16 and older Memo

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Dependent-Legally Free 13+	Yes	Consents	NA	Obtain PCP recommendation regarding vaccination	Obtain court order if PCP recommends vaccination
Dependent-Legally Free 13+	Yes	Does not consent	NA	Do not vaccinate*	No
Dependent-Legally Free 13+	No	NA	NA	Obtain PCP recommendation regarding vaccination	Obtain court order if PCP recommends vaccination
Extended Foster Care	Yes	Consents	NA	Facilitate vaccine	No
Extended Foster Care	Yes	Does Not Consent	NA	Do not vaccinate*	No
Extended Foster Care	No	NA	NA	Consult with legal guardian if available, if no legal guardian obtain PCP recommendation regarding vaccination	Obtain court order if PCP recommends vaccination

*Youth and their parents should be encouraged to meet with their Primary Care Physician (PCP) either in person or through a virtual appointment for the purpose of discussing the COVID-19 vaccine and understanding the vaccine's risks and benefits. This is particularly important for youth and parents who are hesitant to consent to the vaccine, or when youth may not be able to give consent. Youth who do not consent to receiving the COVID-19 vaccination will not be expected to receive the vaccination.

** In circumstances where a parent objects to their child or youth receiving the vaccine for COVID-19, DCYF may seek a court order if the child 13 -17 wants to receive the vaccine and is able to give consent, or a particular child who is not able to consent has a specific need to receive the vaccine. Examples of when the COVID-19 might be necessary for a particular child include when the child's PCP thinks it is specifically important for them or if the vaccine is necessary to preserve a placement.