



Our Program Spotlight series continues by highlighting how our **Family Centered Foster Care & Intact Services** are continuing to provide services in this **Q & A** with the program's Director, **Heather Goff**.

Q: How has the current shelter in place mandate affected how we deliver our foster care and intact services? Do caseworkers still see clients face-to-face?

A: With shelter in place, it has definitely required us to do some **out of the box creative measures** to make sure our services continue on a consistent basis. Our programs require

us to assess the **risk and safety** of children we serve in all of our programs which is being done in a variety of ways. We still have many families we meet with in person but those are being done with consideration of the staff and family's needs and minimizing risk of exposure, whenever possible. Some of our population- our most medically vulnerable- are not having in person contacts to ensure their health is not compromised. However, **all of our families** are having at least weekly virtual visits with CYFS staff to continue to **assess safety** and provide whatever supportive measures we can for them.

Q: Tell us your biggest wins for your program so far during this crisis. What are you most proud of?

A: Our staff **quickly acclimated** to the changes and have been really **flexible** as new information keeps coming in from the CDC, DCFS and Governor Pritzker. I am **amazed** each day when I talk with our staff, how they are managing to offer support to their families in very **creative** ways. Our staff are struggling with not being able to spend time with the youth and families we serve and miss them very much!!

Q: What have been your biggest obstacles?

A: Each week our **struggles** seems to be a bit different. We started with just making sure we had a **mechanism to virtually see** our youth and families which required us to get extra mobile devices. The following week, it was to **ensure our families all had the needed data plans** to allow us to virtually see everyone in the home. This past week with school being cancelled for the remainder of the year, we are working on making sure **each of our youth have Chromebooks/laptop devices** to continue with their e-learning opportunities. I am sure next week will bring a new set of challenges are going to tackle!

Q: If someone reading this wanted to help our child welfare program right now during the pandemic, what would you say is your greatest need?

A: Right now we need everyone to be **looking out** for our kids in Illinois. If there is a family or youth in need, please speak up and let someone know. If there is concern a child is being **abused or neglected**, please call **1-800-25-ABUSE** so we can help them feel **safer**.

Our **communities** have been amazing with the **outpouring of support** we have seen- so many **making masks** for our staff and families- and we are very appreciative! Thank you for all you are doing!

