


<b>20.19, Communicable Disease</b>	
<b>Application:</b> All Department of Children's Services Employees	
<b>Authority:</b> TCA 37-5-105(3), 37-5-106, 10-7-504, 68-5-101 ET SEQ, 68-10-104.	<b>Standards: COA:</b> PA-CR 2 and PA-CFS 17
<b>Commissioner:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 01/09/2026
Original Effective Date: 20.19, 4/01/1998, 20.53, 2/01/2000, 20.19, 1/15/2010 Current Effective Date: 02/09/2026	Supersedes: 8/15/2011 Last Review Date: 10/6/2025
<b>Glossary:</b> ♦ None	

**Policy Statement:**

The TN Department of Children's Services (DCS) employees will identify, control, and report communicable disease or suspected communicable disease in accordance with the provisions of the statues and regulations governing control of communicable disease in Tennessee and the Tennessee Department of Health.

**Purpose:**

To ensure the well-being of children in care, DCS must have protocols in place to screen and protect children from communicable disease.

**Procedures:**

**A. Requirements for Suspected or Confirmed Communicable Disease**

1. All children entering DCS custody will have a Comprehensive Medical Exam, as per DCS policy [20.7, Health Services for Children and Youth in DCS Custody](#), to assess for and address any medical needs or concerns.
2. Children/youth in DCS custody in all settings will receive testing for reported or suspected communicable diseases and have all treatment/follow-up completed as recommended by a licensed medical professional.

3. In accordance with [Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-10-104](#), any minor can receive confidential Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) testing, treatment, and a disease investigation through the Health Department. Medical care for STIs can be provided without parental or DCS consent or knowledge. Any child/youth in DCS custody identified as a contact to an identified STI case will receive testing and appropriate treatment, as well as counseling.
4. DCS personnel will follow the [Standard Precautions to Prevent Transmission of Infectious Agents](#) guidelines as set forth by the Centers for Disease Control.
6. DCS personnel will maintain the confidentiality of health information for all children/youth in DCS custody in accordance with the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\) of 1996](#), as well as DCS policies [9.4, Confidential Child-Specific Information](#) and [9.5, Access and Release of Confidential Child-Specific Information](#).
7. In the rare instances DCS staff is exposed to communicable disease, or exposure is suspected, the [Exposure Control Manual for Blood borne Pathogens](#) will be utilized to guide next steps.
8. For more information and specific action steps regarding suspected or confirmed cases of communicable disease refer to the [Protocol for Suspected or Confirmed Communicable Disease](#).

**Collateral Documents:**

[\*\*Protocol for Suspected or Confirmed Communicable Disease\*\*](#)

[\*\*9.4, Confidential Child-Specific Information\*\*](#)

[\*\*9.5, Access and Release of Confidential Child-Specific Information\*\*](#)

[\*\*20.7, Health Services for Children and Youth in DCS Custody\*\*](#)

[\*\*Exposure Control Manual for Bloodborne Pathogens\*\*](#)