



## **Virtual Family Friends**

### **Combating Stress and Isolation through Virtual Relationship**

#### ***One Call to One Family Once a Week***

***\*In response to the outbreak of COVID-19 and mandates for social distancing, we are now offering families the option of Virtual Family Friend support.***

*Why? Children in our community are at an increased risk for maltreatment due to increased stress and social isolation.*

Families are experiencing increased stress and isolation during COVID-19. Stress and isolation increase the risk of maltreatment of children. Safe Families for Children has been fighting social isolation since day ONE. We want to prevent potential cases of abuse and neglect by surrounding families with social support. Our goals are to keep kids safe and families intact.

*How? Offer hope and encouragement to overwhelmed families through virtual connections.*

Virtual Family Friends are volunteers who provide support to isolated and struggling families through connections by phone, text, Facetime, or other video conferencing. Virtual Family Friends are committing to connect with families at least *1 time a week for 3 months*. One big plus to this new method is that location is no longer an obstacle to meeting.

Approval Process: Once approved, our staff will match you with a waiting family.

Step 1: Fill out an online application and provide 3 references (1 pastoral and 2 personal): <https://newyorkcity.safe-families.org/volunteer-application/>. Select "New York City, NY" as the region in the drop down menu.

Step 2: Schedule a brief 15 minute phone interview with our Volunteer Mobilization Coordinator, Tia Richards: [nyc@safefamilies.net](mailto:nyc@safefamilies.net).

Step 3: Complete background screenings (instructions will be given during interview): Statewide Central Registry for Child Abuse and Neglect and Online Criminal Background Check.

Step 4: Watch the online volunteer training (2 1/2 hours and can be viewed in short segments).

For any questions on the approval process, please contact Tia Richards at [nyc@safefamilies.net](mailto:nyc@safefamilies.net) or (917) 952-0401.

**<https://newyorkcity.safe-families.org>**