

For Public Information
How to protect children who have lost parents to COVID

It has come to the notice of Government that several messages offering children who have lost their parents to COVID for adoption are circulating in social media. The general public is advised to refrain from engaging or encouraging such action, which is in contravention to legal provisions.

The lawful procedure of helping the children who have lost their parents to COVID is given below:

1. Under section 2(14) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (hereinafter mentioned as the Act), children without parents or care givers are defined as children in need of care and protection. The Act and Rules made thereunder mandate a safety net of service delivery structures along with institutional and non-institutional care for these children. It also prescribes detailed Standard Operating procedure for rehabilitation of such children.
2. Thus, if any child is found to have lost parents to COVID, with no one to look after them, the Child ought to be produced before District Child Welfare Committee (CWC) within 24 hours, excluding journey time.
3. The State governments have been advised to use digital platform for interaction in exceptional cases where physical interaction is not possible in current circumstances due to COVID related restrictions.
4. The information about any child who has lost both the parents can be shared with Childline (1098). The local Childline unit will help produce the Child before the CWC within 24 hours. Local Childline unit will also assist CWC in monitoring the well-being of the Child as and when required.
5. The CWC shall ascertain the immediate need of the child and pass appropriate orders for rehabilitation of the Child either to restore the child to care givers or place her/him in Institutional or non-Institutional care, on case to case basis. Effort will be made to sustain the children in their family and community environment as far as possible, while ensuring their safety in their surroundings and safeguarding their interest, as prescribed under the Act.
6. If the Child is restored to any kind of kinship care, CWC will continue to check the well-being of the child on regular basis.
7. Care must be taken to protect the identity of the Child to avoid undue distress to her/him, as provisioned under section 74 of the Act.
8. COVID protocols as prescribed by the competent authority must be followed, while delivering these responsibilities.
9. Persons wishing to adopt orphan children may approach Central Adoption Resource Authority (cara.nic.in) for lawful adoptions