

**MEMORANDUM**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TO:** | **All DCF Staff** |
| **FROM:** | **Commissioner Vannessa Dorantes** |
| **DATE:** | **August 23, 2020** |
| **SUBJECT:** | **Update on Department Operations and Commissioner Weekly Video**  |

As you review our weekly memorandum and video, please know I have taken a few days off to spend time with my family. A great reminder to all of us that we should remain mindful to take care of ourselves and strive to achieve proper work/life balance.

This is not easy. Self-awareness along with supervision come into play.

As we move our critical work forward, we are actively reinforcing that all voices will be heard and respected. As Deputy Commissioner Jodi Hill-Lilly outlines in our video, the Department has continued work on our Safe and Sound culture. We strive to achieve the goal of staff, at all levels, feeling empowered to speak up and express their views fully regarding each aspect of our Agency.

We are now closely approaching the re-opening of schools. Perhaps creating stress and anxiety for not only the families and children we serve, but also for our foster families and those in our workforce who are parents. This past week, the Department sent out two daily newsletters highlighting supports as we prepare for school. This DCF Webinar is also a great resource: [**Together We Learn Preparing Our Youth In Re Entering School**](https://youtu.be/x3TNeOEG5TQ)

We want to hear from you regarding new legislative proposals. Please contact our Legislative Program Director, Vinny Russo, with your thoughts. e can be reached at Vincent.Russo@ct.gov. Vinny also put together an explanation of the legislative process this week titled, "*There Oughtta Be a Law"* which was sent to all staff.

By the end of the month, all children in care will be subject to the visitation triage process. We remain appreciative of staff's efforts to ensure children who are currently visiting in-person with their families are doing so in a safe manner. Your collaborative work is paying great dividends!

With additional activities now being implemented with our families, questions have arisen about the use of credentialed services. Credentialed services have been approved in emergency situations during the pandemic. Moving forward, if supports are required for a family which cannot be achieved by utilizing our own DCF staff or a contracted provider, a request via the WAF process can be forwarded for approval. An assessment will then occur as to whether this is the most appropriate service to meet a family or child's unique needs.

Please view this weekly video for additional updates: [Commissioner's Weekly Video 8-23-20](http://Special%20Guest:%20%20Deputy%20Commissioner%20Jodi%20Hill-Lilly)" \o "Special Guest:  Deputy Commissioner Jodi Hill-Lilly))

Have a great week!