Memorandum

To:       All DCF Staff and DCF Providers

From:   Commissioner Vannessa Dorantes

Date:   7/19/2020

Re:       Update on Department Operations and Commissioner Weekly Video

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Click here for this week's video =🡺 [Commissioner's Weekly Video 7-19-20](https://youtu.be/PGwE1mWQAuA)

The video and memo are intended for internal Department of Children and Families' staff and to also update information for our community providers.

 This past week saw our DCF committed youth take part in a forum to discuss racial unrest in our communities and interactions with Law Enforcement. We are very appreciative of our provider partners who made this forum possible:

Abdul-Rahmaan I. Muhammad of My People Clinical Services moderated the event and the Connecticut Alliance for Foster and Adoptive Parents for providing the virtual platform. Our panel members of Chief Vernon Riddick of the West Hartford Police Department, Detective Andrea Saunders of the Waterbury Police Department and DCF Deputy Commissioner Michael Williams provided the youth with inspirational stories of their personal and professional journeys including their own experiences oppression and racism. **Special thanks** to ALL of the providers who arranged for young people to participate, helped to facilitate their questions and most importantly debriefed the content as they continue to help our youth navigate their place in the world around them.

As our provider partners grapple with their own assessment of their agency's racial justice development, whether through the national CLAS standards or other frameworks, we should all pause to reflect on the life work of two civil rights icons who passed away this week. Rest in Peace Rev C.T. Vivian & Congressman John Lewis. May their *living* for justice not be in vain. <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/remembering-civil-rights-icons-ct-vivian-and-john-lewis/#x>



My clear message to our community providers is we trust you to safely run your operations and provide high quality supports to children and families. There are no prohibitions from the Department for you to resume full operations grounded in public health and CDC guidelines.

Providers had different capacity to pivot to the virtual environment. The resumption of your operations is based on your capacity to deliver while balancing safety standards for your staff and those we serve. Planning for short and long term future, relies heavily on provider feedback with divisions across the Department. You have key contacts within Fiscal, Systems and Clinical & Community Supports-- this systemic input will continue to be reciprocal and iterative.

At this point, we are not sure how the state budget will impact future considerations. For as much as we want to offer flexibility to external stakeholders, there is an authorizing environment we navigate within. With the looming state deficit on the horizon we caution providers to be judicious in your planning and budget approach. This is an ever-changing process with moving targets for all of us. We will continue to communicate with you in a clear and transparent manner when additional information is learned. Full first quarter payments have already been processed and released. You should receive them in the next couple of days.

Children 0-5 years of age in state custody have now been added along with the existing cohorts of children 0-6 months of age, youth with a reunification plan within the next 3 months or any child who has not been able to maintain consistent remote contact with their families. Our collaborative efforts with our provider community continues with this additional cohort of children being permitted to be included in an in-person visitation triage process. Providers should establish a process to include assessment of any potential health vulnerabilities of visit participants, where the proposed visit is to take place, any transportation or personnel protection considerations. Please use CDC or CT DPH guidance when planning. This document included more considerations: [Guiding Principles for the Development of Worker Protection Protocols during the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DCF/Agency/COVID-Emails/Guiding-Principles-for-the-Development-of-Worker-Protection-Protocols.pdf)

Lastly, for Department staff, this past Friday was the 'soft launch' of the Kronos system. We are proud to be one of the first CT state agencies to begin implementation of this electronic system of scheduling, timekeeping and attendance. It will take time for the technology to run smoothly and for users to become comfortable. Please send questions to DCF Kronos Implementation Team at DCF.Kronos@ct.gov