



MEMORANDUM

TO: Our Partners
FROM: CT DCF Commissioner Vanessa Dorantes
DATE: April 15, 2019
SUBJECT: April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

As the new Commissioner of the CT Department of Children Families, this month affords an opportunity to say **thank you** for your partnership. We cannot fulfill our responsibilities to vulnerable populations without collaborative efforts. Your work is at the very heart of our interventions.



Our partnerships are improving outcomes by preventing child abuse and neglect from occurring and re-occurring. Much of the national discussion in child welfare has been focused on “*strengthening families*” and building “*protective factors*” that keep children safe, enhance well-being, and promote permanency. Our collective core activities form the primary focus of all of our efforts. I thank you for that work and know you carry it out with great commitment.

I am focused on reminding Department staff that we do not conduct our work alone. The best outcomes for children and families depend on our entire system working together. A primary focus of my administration is to ensure staff sincerely partner through a vast network of individuals, organizations, and communities to strengthen CT's families and support children to thrive. This means also explicitly addressing systemic issues resulting in disparities to oppressed populations.

Our work is not done in isolation. Open and honest discussions must be reinforced with the myriad of stakeholders who give of their time in the service to communities. Family members themselves – parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins etc – probably have the greatest impact to prevent child abuse and neglect given their unique insights. We will listen to everyone who plays a role in a child and family's life.

This entire system forms the team-- that we as a government agency also belongs to as a member. We are teammates.... We are at our best when we act in concert “*rowing in the same direction*”.

This April, let's recognize **Child Abuse Prevention Month** by saying **thank you** to each other and to all the other members of the child-serving team as we collaborate and work to build brighter futures with CT's children and families.