



DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES
Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities



Vannessa L. Dorantes
Commissioner

Ned Lamont
Governor

To: All DCF Staff

From: Commissioner Vannessa L Dorantes, LMSW

Date: July 15, 2022

Re: Update on Department Operations regarding the Public Act 21-1
An Act Concerning Responsible & Equitable Regulations of Adult-Use
Cannabis

This memo shall serve as a clarification and replacement of the September 15, 2021 memo that was distributed on the same topic.

As many of you may already be aware, as of July 1, 2021 Public Act 21-1 sec. 94. significantly impacts our work. Public Act 21-1 sec. 94 states:

The presence of cannabinoid metabolites in the bodily fluids of a person...:

With respect to a parent or legal guardian of a child or newborn infant, or a pregnant woman, shall not form the sole or primary basis for any action or proceeding by the Department of Children and Families, or any successor agencies provided, nothing in this subdivision shall preclude any action or proceeding by such department based on harm or risk of harm to a child or the use of information on the presence of cannabinoid metabolites in the bodily fluids of any person in any action or proceeding.

Although Public Act 21-1 legalizes the use of marijuana in the State of Connecticut, the Department recognizes that the use of marijuana by any adult/child may still pose a risk and impact on their social emotional well-being. The Department will continue the practice of assessing parental capacity and impact on the ability to care for the child throughout our work. This begins at the Front Door in determining the acceptance/non acceptance of a referral to the Careline. Please refer to [Policy 22-1](#) for further guidance.

Once the Department becomes involved with a family and there are concerns regarding substance misuse including alcohol, marijuana, prescription, non-prescription and illegal substances staff should refer to [Policy 21-7](#) which requires a screening tool be utilized to

assess all adult and adolescent clients demonstrating indicators of substance misuse. The Department will then tailor interventions with families based upon substance use impact on parental capacity and ability to safeguard children.