

Connecticut Department of Children and Families



At a Glance

VANNESSA DORANTES, Commissioner
Jodi Hill-Lilly, Deputy Commissioner
Michael Williams, Deputy Commissioner
Treana Mazzotta, Interim Bureau Chief of Strategic Planning
Ken Mysogland, Bureau Chief of External Affairs
Maureen Duggan, Legal Director

Resources

- Established - 1970
- Statutory Authority - CGS Chap. 319
- Central Office: 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106
- Average number of full-time employees – 2,966
- Recurring Operational Expenses SFY19 \$779,373,046

Organizational Structure

- Office of the Commissioner
- Administration
- Operations
- Strategic Planning
- External Affairs
- Legal Director
- Chief of Child Welfare
- Assistant Chief (Regions 1 & 5)
- Assistant Chief (Regions 2 & 3)
- Assistant Chief (Regions 4 & 6)

Regional/Area Offices

Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6
Bridgeport Norwalk/ Stamford	Milford New Haven	Middletown Norwich Willimantic	Hartford Manchester	Danbury Torrington Waterbury	Meriden New Britain

Facilities

- The Albert J. Solnit Children's Center -- North Campus (formerly Connecticut Children's Place)
- The Albert J. Solnit Children's Center -- South Campus (formerly Riverview Hospital)
- Wilderness School

Mission

Working together with families and communities for children who are healthy, safe, smart and strong. Sharpening the safety lens through primary prevention across the child welfare system. Partnering with communities and empowering families to raise resilient children who thrive.

Five Strategic Goals

- *Keep children and youth safe, with focus on most vulnerable populations.*
- *Engage our workforce through an organizational culture of mutual support.*
- *Connect systems and processes to achieve timely permanency.*
- *Contribute to child and family wellbeing by enhancing assessments and interventions.*
- *Eliminate racial and ethnic disparate outcomes within our department.*

Statutory Responsibility

The Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) is a consolidated child welfare agency, having responsibility for prevention, child protective services, children's behavioral health and education. The primary beneficiaries of services are the children and families of Connecticut who are served in some capacity by the Department each year.

As the Department continues to work to improve services to families and children, there will be increased emphasis on partnership and collaboration, through focusing on prevention and early intervention. The recently approved Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) requires the system to explore promising practices and evidence-based practices for children and families across the state's various human services systems. The shift will be from a system focused primarily on child protection to a collaborative child welfare system focused on prevention and early intervention.

Department Data and Information

Children and Families served

- At any point in time, the Department provides direct services to approximately 27,000 children and 12,000 families across its programs and mandated areas of service.
- Approximately 12,000 cases are open on a given day.
- Approximately 2,000 investigations and 2,200 family assessments are underway at any point in time.
- Approximately 4,300 children are in some type of placement.

- Positive Trend: There are 444 fewer children in care as of July 1, 2019 compared to January 2011. That is a reduction of 9.3 percent.
- Adoptions were finalized for 516 children, and subsidized guardianships transferred for 405 children during SFY2019.
- Positive Trend: The % of children overall placed with relatives or someone else they know (kin) has risen to 43.3% in July 2019 compared to 21% in January 2011.

Reports of Abuse and Neglect

- The Careline (formerly “Hotline”) received approximately 102,509 calls in CY2018, compared to 90,752 calls in CY2017, 89,845 calls in CY2016, 87,953 calls in CY2015, and 87,825 calls in CY2014.
- In CY 2018, there were 59,152 total reports made with an acceptance rate of 48.6%.
- Mandated reporters accounted for 84% of those reports.

Below are the number of Child Protective Services (CPS) Reports from the years 2014 through 2018. Those numbers are:

Year	Total Reports	Total MR	% MR	Total Accepted	% Accepted
2014	49,938	38,007	76.1%	29,849	59.8%
2015	51,339	39,793	77.5%	29,278	57.0%
2016	52,417	40,979	78.2%	30,663	58.5%
2017	54,165	43,814	80.9%	31,299	57.8%
2018	59,152	49,825	84.2%	28,748	48.6%

In March of 2019, an Online Reporting Pilot was initiated for Mandated Reporters for lower risk CPS Reports. The online reporting functionality is currently being built through the development of the new DCF system, CT-KIND (Kid’s Information Network Database). Once online reporting is fully integrated, it is anticipated the call volume will decrease with CPS Reports being filed online without the need to call the Careline. This presents as a good opportunity to start shifting the conversation around volume from “calls” to “reports” and show a trend more indicative of the Department’s interaction with the community.

Additionally, there were 11,460 substantiated allegations of abuse and/or neglect in CY2018, and 16,802 unsubstantiated allegations of abuse and/or neglect. Of the total number, 59% resulted in a substantiation of abuse and/or neglect, and 41% were unsubstantiated.

Improvements/Achievements 2018-2019

Strengthening Families Practice Model

- Experience and research indicate that the quality of family participation is the single most important factor in the success of our interventions.
- The Strengthening Families Practice Model and Differential Response – which is an important component of the practice model -- will substantially improve how we support families to take control and responsibility of their own treatment and their own lives.
- Statewide implementation began in 2011.

The core components of the practice model include:

- Family Engagement
- Purposeful Visitation
- Family Centered Assessments
- Supervision and Management
- Child and Family Teaming
- Effective Case Planning
- Individualizing services

Differential Response System (DRS)

On March 5, 2012, the Department of Children and Families launched its Differential Response System (DRS). UCONN School of Social Work continues to function as our Performance Improvement Center, analyzing our Family Assessment Response data and that of our contracted service, Community Support for Families (CSF) Program.

- In CY 2018, 50.4% were assigned to the FAR track, an increase from last year (42.4%) and a significant increase from the prior year (39%).
- Since implementation, close to 44% of reports involve children under the age of 5.
- A total of 51,390 (unduplicated) families have been served by our FAR since implementation. Approximately 48% of families receiving a FAR are White, followed by Hispanic (28%), Black (19%), and Other (5%). The majority of reports come from school personnel and police.
- 42% of the FAR reports received are single parent households and 84% of the families scored at low/very low risk upon completion of their FAR.
- About 72% of FAR families have no prior history with DCF. 28% of families have had at

least 1 prior report and 18% had at least 1 prior substantiated report

- Of all the families who received a FAR, 61.3% have not experienced a subsequent report, about 44% of the subsequent reports involve children age 5 and under.
- Most of the subsequent reports occurred within 6 months of case closure (41%).
- Overall, 88% of FAR families, did not have a subsequent substantiated report.

Considered Removal Child and Family Team Meeting (CR-CFTM)

The Department continues to build a teaming continuum that ensures that child and family voices are heard throughout every stage of the child welfare process. The purpose of CR-CFTMs are to: bring family members to the table when DCF is initially considering removal of a child from the home using families' natural networks as resources to mitigate the safety factor and, when necessary, for placement; provide an opportunity to collaboratively plan with parents, legal guardians, children and professionals involved with the family to develop specific, individualized interventions for children and families; expand services and supports for families at the community level; and develop specific safety plans for children at risk of removal from their homes. Since 2013:

- 16,094 child-specific meetings have been facilitated, involving 9,697 families.
- 74% of meetings (11,981) occurred prior to the child's removal.
- This year (partial data through 5/1/19), 79% of meetings occurred prior to the child's removal, consistent from the prior year.
- This past year 70% of children were not recommended for removal and kinship care continues to be the primary placement recommended for children who are the subject of a CR meeting.

Commissioner's Organizational Strategy and Agency Key Results

The Department's overall agency strategy is built around seven key results which will provide us with targeted, measurable outcomes that our core operational functions will work to deliver. These results are deliberately aspirational. As part of a larger child welfare system, DCF will work in partnership to ensure a holistic understanding of what children and families deserve from us. The seven key results are:

- Children are able to live safely with their families.
- Children will live with relatives, kin or someone they know.
 - Relative care was made a top priority in January 2011 and continues to remain a priority across the agency.
 - Work with the Child Welfare Strategy Group of the Annie E. Casey Foundation identified improvements in the licensing process. Staff training was conducted, and resource guides for staff and relatives were produced.
 - As a result, changes to expedite assessments of kinship homes, to license homes with only technical barriers to licensing, and to institute quality improvement systems also were implemented.
 - The % of children overall placed with relatives or someone else they know has

risen to 43.3% in August 2019 compared to 21% in January 2011.

- Children will live with a family
 - Reduce the use of congregate settings for children – especially young children.
 - The percentage of children in congregate care as of August 1, 2019 declined to 7.6% compared to 29.8% of all children in care on January 1, 2011.
 - Team Decision Making/Child and Family Team Meetings– initially for younger children and, subsequently, for adolescents -- brought together families and natural supports in a strength-based, solution-focused effort to find family settings for children in congregate care.
 - The number of children ages six and under in congregate care settings declined to 6 as of August 1, 2019 compared to 38 in January 2011.
 - The number of children ages 12 and under declined to 34 as of August 1, 2019 compared to 200 on January 1, 2019.
 - Out-of-state placements fell to 9 as of August 1, 2019 compared to 362 on January 1, 2011.
- Children will experience timely permanency
- Children in care will be better off- healthy, safe, smart and strong
- Youth who age out will be prepared for success