

**FOSTERING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN
DCYF, SCHOOLS & THE COURT:
WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE
EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN
& YOUTH INVOLVED WITH DCYF**

Kevin J. Aucoin, Esq., Deputy
Director, DCYF
Mike Burk, MSW, Assistant to the
Director, DCYF

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DCYF Youth Development & Educational Support Programs

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Youth Development

- ▶ **Consolidated Youth Services**
 - ▶ Life Skills Assessments & Education
 - ▶ ASPIRE Financial Literacy
 - ▶ Real Connections Permanency
 - ▶ Teen Grants
 - ▶ National Youth In Transition Database (NYTD)
 - ▶ YESS Aftercare Services
 - ▶ Adolescent Support Specialists to Assist DCYF Staff
- ▶ **Medicaid to Age 21**

DCYF Youth Development & Educational Support Programs

- ▶ **Educational Advocates for Children/Youth identified as needing Special Education Services or at risk for needing Special Education Services**
- ▶ **Educational Coordinator**
- ▶ **Positive Educational Partnership (PEP) Program**
- ▶ **DCYF Post Secondary Education Tuition Assistance Program**
 - ▶ Federal Chafee Education & Training Voucher (ETV) Program
 - ▶ DCYF Higher Education Opportunity Grant Program
- ▶ **Coming Soon – Higher Education Success Convening!**

Fostering Connections Act - Education

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- ▶ Educational Stability
 - At time of first removal and any subsequent placement changes
 - Reimbursement for Transportation
- ▶ Educational Placement Changes **ONLY** When in Child's Best Interest
 - Immediate Enrollment
 - Transfer of Records

Fostering Connections Act - Education

DCYF Revised Policy Requires DCYF Staff to Make Every Effort to Maintain School Placement unless determined to not be in child's best interest

Issues DCYF Staff Are Required To Consider In Determining Best Interest

- ▶ **Expected length of child's current out of home placement**
- ▶ **Child's permanency plan**
- ▶ **Child's school transfer history**
- ▶ **School programs and activities that address the unique needs or interests of the student**
- ▶ **Child's/Youth's preference**
- ▶ **Student's ability to earn full academic credit, participate in sports or other extra-curricular activities, proceed to the next grade and graduation**
- ▶ **Impact of the commute to the school of origin on the child**
- ▶ **Where siblings of the child in care attend school**
- ▶ **Potential safety issues**

Fostering Connections Act - Education

Challenges to Maintaining Educational Placement

- ▶ Lack of foster homes within close proximity
- ▶ Student functions well in school but needs higher level of treatment services that may not be within close proximity
- ▶ Who transports and how far is too far?
- ▶ Payment for Transportation
- ▶ School is more than just academics

DCYF System Transformation and Impact on Educational Stability

DCYF System Transformation

Over the past several years, the DCYF has:

- ▶ Reduced the number of youth placed out of state by over 50% from 2007 -2010
- ▶ Reduced the number of children in residential care by over 30% (Jan 2012 – 536)
- ▶ Lowered the number of children entering out of home care by 27% from 1,893 in 2006 to 1,380 in 2010

DCYF System Transformation

What is System of Care?

- ▶ System of care is, first and foremost, a set of values and principles that provides an organizing framework for system reform on behalf of children, youth and families

Redesigning service delivery by:

- ▶ Using Family Team Meetings, Wraparound, & Natural Supports for child, youth and families formally involved with DCYF
- ▶ Increasing access to home and community based services and supports.
- ▶ Decreasing hospitalizations and use of residential treatment

DCYF System Transformation

System of Care: Culture Change Values & Principles

- ▶ Family-driven and youth guided
- ▶ Home and community-based
- ▶ Strength-based and individualized
- ▶ Culturally and linguistically competent
- ▶ Integrated across systems
- ▶ Connected to natural support networks
- ▶ Data-driven, outcomes-oriented

DCYF System Transformation

- ▶ Development and Rollout of Phase I – Family Care Community Partnerships (FCCPs)–
 - Community based prevention focused collaboratives
 - Intended to work with families at-risk for DCYF involvement, youth leaving the Training School and families who come to the attention of DCYF but who can be best served in the community
 - Schools **CAN** and **SHOULD** be active partners with FCCPs
- ▶ Development and Soon To Be Implemented Phase II – Networks of Care
 - Lead agency managed wraparound services to families and children active with DCYF and the Court
 - Schools **CAN** and **SHOULD** be active partners with the emerging Networks of Care

DCYF System Transformation

Effects on Educational Success

- ▶ **Focus is on keeping children and youth in home communities and schools even if placed outside of home**
- ▶ **If out of home placement is needed – least restrictive setting with emphasis on educational stability unless not in child’s best interest**
- ▶ **May mean a child is placed outside of their home community but remains at their school of origin**
- ▶ **School is more than just academics – must provide opportunities for students to be fully engaged in academic and non-academic activities**
- ▶ **Schools intended to be partners**
- ▶ **Parents/youth will be encouraged to have schools sit at the table**
- ▶ **Reduced lengths of stay in out of home placements will lead to shorter out of district educational placements**
- ▶ **Immediate school enrollment and records transfers critical**

Educational Success for Children and Youth in DCYF Care – Moving Forward

Educational Success for Children and Youth in DCYF Care – Moving Forward

- ▶ Starting Early – The Importance Of Early Intervention Services And Early Care And Education
 - Increase referrals to Early Intervention Services for children ages 0 – 3 involved with DCYF
 - Ensure effective transition from EI services to school systems for DCYF involved children at age 2 ½

Educational Success for Children and Youth in DCYF Care – Moving Forward

▶ **School Culture**

▶ **YOUTH VOICE!**

- ▶ Information Sharing – Who, What, When, Why
- ▶ Importance of ensuring student's ability to earn full academic credit, participate in sports or other extra-curricular activities, proceed to the next grade and graduation

Educational Success for Children and Youth in DCYF Care – Moving Forward

Education Stability

- ▶ Foster Parent Recruitment Support
- ▶ Access to School Emergency Contact Lists

Educational Success for Children and Youth in DCYF Care – Moving Forward

Data System Alignment

- ▶ DATA Hub Project
 - ▶ Linking data from DCYF's RICHIST data system and RIDE's system through use of SASID
 - ▶ Data Analysis and Use to Improve Practices
 - ▶ DCYF Review of Placement Proximity to Educational Settings
- ▶ MOU with RIDE and LEAs on data sharing at aggregate and student levels
 - ▶ Tracking School Attendance and Educational Outcomes

Educational Success for Children and Youth in DCYF Care – Moving Forward

▶ **Educational Records**

- ▶ Clear procedures on transfer of student records
- ▶ RIDE's E-Transcripts and Instructional Management Systems in development

▶ **DCYF/School Partnerships**

- ▶ Stability - Example – Central Falls Restorative Justice Program
- ▶ School Based Foster Care Liaisons

Contact Information

- ▶ Kevin J. Aucoin, Esq. Deputy Director, DCYF
 - Kevin.aucoin@dcyf.ri.gov
 - Phone: 401-528-3677
- ▶ Mike Burk, MSW, Asst. to the Director, DCYF
 - Mike.burk@dcyf.ri.gov
 - Phone: 401-528-3576