



# DCF Today

Accomplishments 2011-2013

Allison Blake, PhD, LSW - DCF Commissioner  
Chris Christie - NJ Governor  
Kim Guadagno - NJ Lt. Governor

[www.nj.gov/dcf](http://www.nj.gov/dcf)

## Introduction

In 2011, the Department of Children and Families undertook an ambitious planning process that culminated in the development of a Strategic Plan for 2012-2014. This Strategic Plan has provided DCF a roadmap to help the Department achieve its mission of ensuring the safety, well-being and success of children, youth, families and communities in New Jersey.

*DCF Today* highlights our work, accomplishments and progress over the last three years. It is organized around the five strategic priorities of our Strategic Plan.

May 2014

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I present the New Jersey Department of Children and Families' *DCF Today*. Three years ago we set out on a long-term strategic planning effort to help guide the department's work around five major strategic priorities. We knew we had significant organizational work to do in order to unify a department created by the merger of separate divisions, implement a new case practice model, address employee morale issues and institute brand new procedures for managing with data. Over the past three years we have made remarkable progress in building these systems and creating a unified culture. With these changes now well established, barriers that once impeded the integrated delivery of services have been removed, and we are beginning to see the benefits in terms of outcomes.

Much of our strategic planning work has either been accomplished or is actively underway. As you will see in this progress report, these accomplishments were achieved while simultaneously responding to Superstorm Sandy, integrating services for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and responding to the challenge of human trafficking.

It is important to note that this progress report identifies the accomplishments of the whole department categorized under the Strategic Objectives of the plan as a means to illustrate the types of work that support the strategic objectives. However, just as DCF works in unison, so do the strategic objectives of the plan. Together, they create a framework for how DCF conducts business and delivers services to the individuals that we serve. It helps propel us toward our vision of ensuring a better today and even greater tomorrow for every individual we serve.

As we look to the future and consider the goals we set three years ago, our efforts going forward – outlined in our 2014-2016 Strategic Plan – will include a continued focus on transparency and accountability as well as moving toward more evidenced-based and trauma-informed practice.

For the next two years, this focus will be central to fulfilling our department's mission to work in partnership with New Jersey's communities to ensure the safety, well being, and success of New Jersey's children, youth, women and families. Of course, there is more to be done, but we are confident we are on the right path.

Sincerely,



Allison Blake, LSW, Ph.D.  
Commissioner  
New Jersey Department of Children and Families



# DCF Today

**Vision** To ensure a better today and even a greater tomorrow for every individual we serve

**Mission** In partnership with New Jersey's communities, DCF will ensure the safety, well-being, and success of New Jersey's children and families

## Strategic Priorities



### Seamless System of Care

To provide ease of access to care for children, youth and families



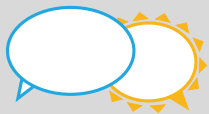
### Continuous Quality Improvement

To ensure the integrity and quality of DCF's system of care



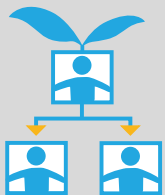
### Partnerships

To collaborate with stakeholders and community partners to improve outcomes for New Jersey children, youth and families



### Communication

To enhance the effectiveness of communication with employees, partners, the media and the general public



### Organizational Development

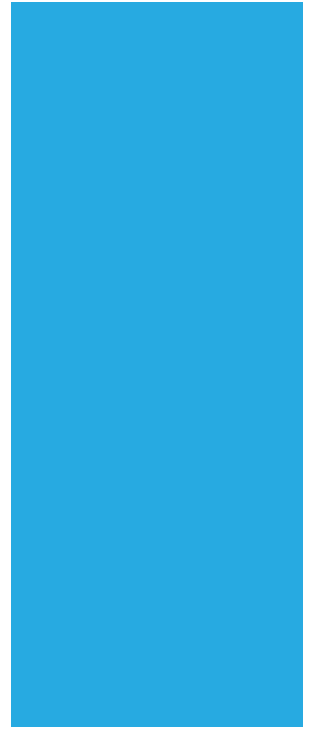
To continually examine and prepare the organization structurally, in alignment with the mission and strategic plan

## DCF's work is strongly rooted in our Values

*We value the unique strengths, needs and abilities of all individuals.*

*We achieve positive outcomes through individualized, family-oriented, child and youth centered services.*

*We foster healthy relationships that promote safety and well-being for children, youth, adults and families.*



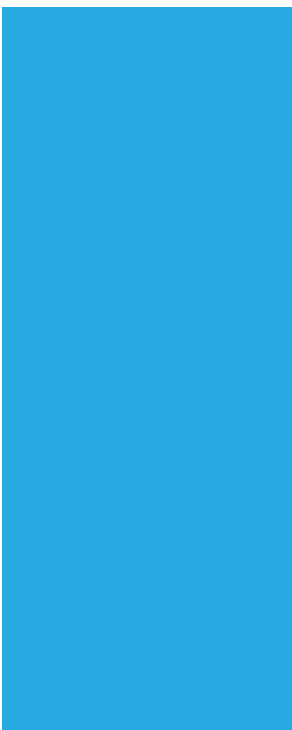
## Seamless System of Care



The following accomplishments provide examples of our work across the department to achieve our goal of providing a seamless system of care and by providing ease of access to care for children, youth and families

- Expanded the Summer Housing and Internship Program (SHIP) to serve more youth at four university campuses across the state
- Created the Summer Internship Program (SIP) to assist youth from the Foster Care Scholars Program develop job readiness skills
- Successfully implemented Fostering Connections Educational Stability for children and youth in foster care
- Created the Helping Youth Thrive in Placement (HYTIP) Task Force to identify systems changes necessary to advance normalcy for youth in placement
- Implemented statewide Adolescent Practice Forums to bring together DCF staff from across the state to discuss current issues and practice trends in our work with adolescents
- Funded new street outreach programs for youth at risk of homelessness
- Successfully transitioned the Division on Women from Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to DCF
- Successfully transitioned 16,000 youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities from Department of Human Services (DHS) to DCF

- Successfully transitioned substance abuse treatment services for youth from DHS to DCF
- Issued a Request for Qualifications to expand the capacity of the Children’s System of Care to provide in-home services to youth with intellectual or developmental disabilities
- Unified all care management services for children and youth with behavioral health challenges
- Funded a new treatment model for youth impacted by human trafficking
- Expanded evidence-based Home Visitation programs to all 21 counties with the capacity to serve over 5,000 families
- Expanded the Domestic Violence Liaison program so that almost 10,000 consultations are provided annually
- Piloted a Batterer’s Intervention Program in three counties
- Successfully implemented a Clinical Supervision/case conferencing model in child protection offices across the state called Focus on Supervision
- Launched the Ever-Fi Financial Literacy curriculum for DCF adolescent service providers
- Expanded the Ever-Fi Financial Literacy curriculum to the DCF Office of Education schools
- Awarded a federal grant, Project Launch, to replicate evidence-based practices for children and families from pregnancy to age eight in Essex County
- Awarded a federal planning grant to help identify strategies to prevent and respond to youth homelessness



*We are ethical, fair and transparent in all that we do.*

*We are culturally aware, informed and responsive; we value and respect diverse traditions, heritages, and experiences.*

*We work in partnership with individuals, families and the community, as well as with other state departments and within DCF, to build connection, strength and success.*

*We are professional, highly trained and committed to the communities we serve.*

- Increased the Independent Living Stipend for adolescents aging out of DCF
- Restructured and enhanced the Youth Advisory Boards from 12 to 15 to support all 21 counties
- Funded the statewide expansion of the Mom2Mom Helpline for parents of children with special needs
- Expanded residential treatment programs for young mothers and their children
- Launched a dual enrollment program for students from the DCF Schools with the community colleges of Atlantic and Mercer Counties
- Launched the Health Aide certification program and the Microsoft Office Specialist certification program for students at the DCF Schools
- Funded 14 new Family Success Centers
- Implemented the Medicaid Extension for Young Adults (MEYA) program to extend health insurance for youth aging out of foster care until age 26

## Continuous Quality Improvement



The following lists DCF's accomplishments in its efforts to continually examine and prepare the organization structurally, in alignment with the mission and strategic plan.

- Trained over 84 child care centers and 42 child care providers in the Strengthening Families/ Protective Factors approach
- Expanded the Qualitative Review (QR) process statewide. The QR process assesses system performance and identifies strengths and areas for improvements to support positive outcomes for children and families.
- Expanded community partners' participation in the QR process
- Developed a QR shadow process for stakeholders

- Included community partners in ChildStat
- Adopted updated forensic evaluation guidelines and issued an RFQ for forensic evaluation services
- Adopted a psychotropic medication policy, including management and oversight of utilization protocols, for children in out-of-home placement
- Launched a new interdepartmental process to support resource homes
- Annually manages the licensing and regulation of:
  - Over 4000 child care centers
  - Approximately 2,700 family child care homes
  - Over 600 congregate care and private facilities/homes for children
  - 45 children's partial care programs
  - 50 adoption agencies
- Developed an Administrative Review Process for critical cases
- Piloted Permanency Roundtables, an intervention designed, to improve permanency planning for older youth
- Developed a county-level data dashboard for County Inter-Agency Coordinating Councils (CIACC)

## Partnerships



DCF's efforts to collaborate with stakeholders and community partners to improve outcomes for New Jersey children, youth and families are evident in the following accomplishments:

- Developed and implemented the Deemed Status pilot for partial care programs to explore accreditation reciprocity
- Partnered with the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE), Department of Human Services (DHS), and Department of Health (DOH), and other stakeholders to develop the NJ Birth to Three Early Learning Standards

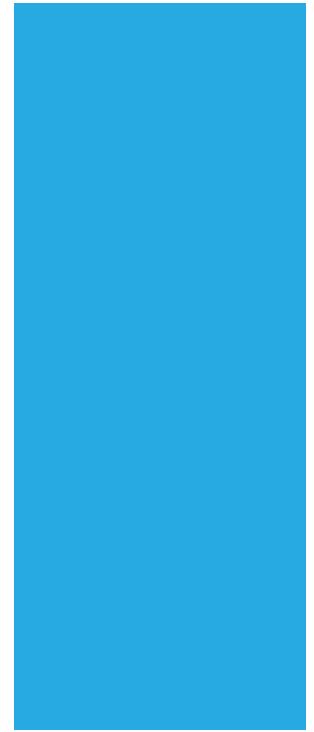
*We provide excellent customer service so anyone can easily find and access services when needed.*

*We provide innovative solutions aligned with community needs.*

*We are accountable to our partners, ourselves and the communities we serve.*

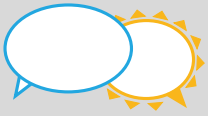
*We are good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.*





- Partnered with DOE, DHS, and DOH to secure the federal Race to the Top (RTT) grant, which will help New Jersey implement an aligned and coordinated system of early education and care for the state's children
- Partnered with DOE, DHS, DOH, American Academy of Pediatrics, Traumatic Loss Coalition, and other federal and national partners on the state-led Child Task Force to develop a long-term recovery plan for children and families in New Jersey
- Celebrated the New Jersey Foster Care Scholars Program's 10th anniversary
- Celebrated the School Based Youth Services' 25th anniversary
- Launched the statewide expansion of the Education Partnerships with CIACCs
- Collaborated with the DOH to expand Central Intake for Home Visitation programs to 15 counties. The remaining six will be established through the RTT grant.
- Sponsored 1st Annual Fatherhood Conference
- Launched the "Dads Take Your Children to School Day"
- Participated in the 22nd Annual Displaced Homemaker Annual Awards Reception
- Launched the Risk Management Workgroup to redesign the risk management reporting system
- Partnered with the Verizon Foundation, NJ Coalition for Battered Women, and Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund on a domestic violence awareness PSA featuring NJ First Lady Mary Pat Christie

## Communications



DCF has worked to enhance the effectiveness of communication with employees, partners, the media and the general public through the following accomplishments to date:

- Launched the “Keeping Your DYFS Case Open” YouTube video
- Created a DCF YouTube channel
- Expanded funding for youth suicide prevention campaign and website enhancements
- Launched the Healthy Sleep awareness campaign and provided 5,000 “sleep sacks” and educational materials to parents at Family Success Centers and FQHC across the state
- Updated the DCF website
- Updated the DCF Intranet site
- Launched a Child Abuse Prevention/Strengthening Families newsletter
- Launched an electronic DCF newsletter
- Launched the About Human Trafficking electronic newsletter
- Launched “Ready, Set, Prepare!” an emergency preparedness newsletter for DCF staff

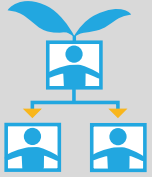


*We continually seek to learn and correct ourselves when needed to provide the very best solutions for children, youth, individuals and families.*

*We recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with our system.*

*We listen to and communicate openly and honestly with the community and with our partners.*

## Organizational Development



In DCF's efforts to continually examine and prepare the organization structurally, in alignment with the mission and strategic plan, the following lists our accomplishments to date:

- Completed Case Practice Model training for all 46 child protection offices
- Enhanced Red Flags training to help child protection staff better understand child development and work with parents on child health and well-being
- Launched "weekly Did You Know?" policy and practice email newsletter
- Funded development of Montclair State University's Adolescent Advocacy Certificate Program for DCF staff
- Funded DCF staff participation in Violence Against Women Certificate Program at Rutgers University
- Continued the DCF Data Fellows program to enable staff to "manage by data"
- Provided human trafficking training to direct service staff
- Provided leadership development training and mentoring to Local Office managers
- Opened the DCF Professional Center, a central location for DCF-sponsored training, meetings, and professional development programs for staff
- Developed and implemented a support system for child protection staff exposed to trauma
- Improved DCF staff access to information by providing adolescent and SPRU staff with iPads, and Assistant Family Service Workers with smartphones
- Refined contract documents to require purchase of culturally competent services
- Enhanced and reinstated the Employee Recognition Program
- Enhanced and updated the Adoption Certificate curriculum with Rutgers University



## Contact Us

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Constituents with any department inquiries, concerns or questions can contact the DCF Office of Advocacy by calling the toll-free number at 1-877-543-7864, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.