

# Introduction

ChildStat is a learning, management, and accountability tool used by DCF to support continuous quality improvement, foster a shared sense of accountability and promote system-wide problem solving around critical issues affecting child and family outcomes.

To strengthen the effectiveness of the ChildStat process and better integrate Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes, DCF has adapted the process of ChildStat by shifting from a Child, Protection and Permanency (CP&P) Local Office focus to a county focus, expanding the scope to include a discussion of county needs and participation of the Children's System of Care (CSOC) and by aligning the ChildStat process with DCF's existing Qualitative Review process.

The core features of the adapted process include analysis and interpretation of County and Local Office quantitative and qualitative data, dialogue between Executive Management, Senior Leadership, Area Leadership, Local Office Leadership and System Partners to reinforce expectations and strengthen case practice, accountability mechanisms for outlining immediate next steps, aligning longer-term next steps with the work of County CQI teams, and participation of leadership at all levels in progress reporting over time.

## *Primary Objectives*

- Provide real-time feedback to agency and leadership on needs, current practices, system barriers, outputs and outcomes;
- Provide an opportunity for real and open dialogue regarding pursuit of agency practice expectations and quality practice;
- Deepen our collective understanding of the interconnectedness of the child welfare system overall and the role of counties in the broader context;
- Support each county in thinking holistically and making use of available quantitative and qualitative data;
- Strengthen the collective understanding of what needs to be transformed to improve practice and promote positive outcomes for children and families;
- Reinforce DCF's ongoing commitment to our value-based approach to decision making;
- Outline concrete next steps for Central, Area and Local Office leadership and CSOC; and
- Provide a post-ChildStat progress update process that aligns with the County CQI Team reporting process.

## *ChildStat Structure*

**Preparing for the ChildStat Meeting** – Preparation includes compiling and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data; selecting, reviewing and preparing cases to be discussed; reviewing all available information and preparing materials to support the meeting. These tasks are primarily carried out by the Office of Quality, the Office of Research, Evaluation and Reporting, the Children’s System of Care and CP&P staff in the counties that are presenting. The process of preparing for ChildStat differs for the varying participants. Below we provide more detail and distinguish processes for participants who recently participated in the QR and are entering into the program improvement period, participants from the counties that are providing an update a year into the program improvement period and participants who are representing CSOC.

**During the ChildStat Meeting** – Agency leadership and system partners from various levels in the agency convene to analyze data and participate in a dialogue to interpret the data; highlight successes; identify areas needing improvement; gain a collective understanding of what needs to be done to improve case practice; and outline next steps.

When discussing the data, attention should be paid to outliers, both positive and negative, and should include a discussion about system and area/local level factors that contributed to those outliers. This should lead to a discussion intended to examine practice expectations and decision-making processes.

**After the ChildStat Meeting** – After ChildStat the members of the initial presenting team provide a debrief for each Local Office to ensure that all staff within the county have the opportunity to benefit from the learning and expectations that were outlined at ChildStat and incorporate ChildStat lessons into case practice and office management.

Additional key activities include: following-up on short-term directives identified during ChildStat, incorporating guidance provided in the County CQI process, tracking and reporting on progress regarding next steps outlined at ChildStat and in the approved County PIP document. The purpose of these activities is to foster accountability related to establishing solutions, implementing and sustaining practice improvements.

