



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

PHILIP MURPHY  
*Governor*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

CHRISTINE NORBUT BEYER, MSW  
*Commissioner Designate*

May 17, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to release the report on the final phase of the Needs Assessment for the New Jersey Department of Children and Families. The Needs Assessment has been a multi-year, mixed methods study conducted by the Child Welfare and Well-Being Research Unit at Rutgers University School of Social Work. Four years ago, DCF undertook an effort to better understand the needs that families face when they become involved with the Division of Child Protection & Permanency, the services that are available to meet those needs, and the extent to which we are connecting families to those supports. In the current phase of the project, nearly 2,000 CP&P staff, resource parents, and parents from children's families of origin participated in surveys about their experiences with the Division. The attached report summarizes the findings from these surveys, providing us with important insights about the match between families' needs and our current service array.

The report provides encouraging news:

- Staff reported that there are services available in most domains to meet the needs that families face when they are involved with CP&P.
- The majority of parents receiving services in any domain reported that they were referred to those services by CP&P. This suggests that we are linking children and families with needed supports that they otherwise might not have accessed.
- When parents received services that CP&P referred them to, parents report being supported by those services.

Meanwhile, other findings underscore the fact that many of the families we serve are facing pervasive, systemic challenges that lack ready solutions. Family poverty is one of the most commonly-reported needs experienced by families involved with CP&P. Its impact is felt across domains such as being able to meet basic needs, access health care, child care, transportation, but most acutely in the area of housing, where some families encounter a lack of available services in their community, and others face barriers to accessing the existing services due to eligibility criteria.

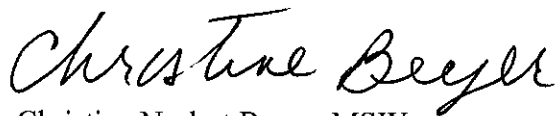
[www.nj.gov/def](http://www.nj.gov/def)

This report and the Needs Assessment as a whole, indicates that there is alignment between what our children and families need and the array of services that DCF invests in through our network of provider and community partners. However, there is still much to do, within our Department, across state agencies, and in our communities. As DCF continues its ongoing work of ensuring that our child welfare system is equipped to ensure safety, permanency and well-being for every child, the Needs Assessment will inform decisions about the strategies and partnerships that we need to maintain, strengthen and create.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the CP&P staff, resource parents, and parents from children's families of origin who generously shared their time and experiences for the Needs Assessment process.

I hope you will take the time to read this important report and reflect on both the progress we have made and the work that remains.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christine Beyer".

Christine Norbut Beyer, MSW  
Commissioner Designate