



To: School Superintendents, Charter School and Renaissance School Project
Lead Persons, Administrators of Nonpublic Schools

Route to: Elementary, Middle and High School Principals, Health Teachers, School
Nurses, School Counselors

From: Christine Norbut Beyer, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Date: April 23, 2020

First, thank you for your continued work to ensure the safety of children and youth during COVID-19. These are challenging times and we know that many of the families we collectively serve lack the basic necessities that make sheltering in place and social distancing manageable. Families may be in close quarters, and stressors can be exacerbated as workers are furloughed, money is tight, supplies are scarce, and tempers may be short.

We know that incidents of child abuse and neglect can increase, even while reports of child abuse and neglect decrease. If a child isn't reporting to school, visiting friends or family in the community, or seeing a pediatrician for routine physical checkups, there aren't enough 'eyes on' to spot the warning signs for abuse and neglect. As a result, since the beginning of March, child abuse and neglect reports have declined 32%. **We need your help.**

NJ DCF has designed [several posters](#) to raise awareness. [This one](#) is directed to educators, guidance counselors, school nurses and social workers. In addition, we have created a [QR code](#) that can be used by teachers and others serving youth in online presentations. Using any mobile device's camera, one can 'capture' a web address that leads to [a poster designed specifically for children](#), with a list of hotlines and helplines. The QR code is discreet, which allows children to access the information or resources they need to be safe.

We're asking New Jersey's educators to use this QR code in their student interactions. It can be embedded into [PowerPoint presentations](#), Zoom or Google classroom backgrounds or into email signatures.

#BridgeTheGap. Together we can help to keep our state's children safe, healthy and connected.