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## It's Time to Head Back to School



This can be a difficult time of year for foster kids, especially if they are starting a school in a new city or town. Depending on their age, they will need to know how to get to school, who their teacher(s) will be, where the bathroom is, what kinds

of notebooks they will need and who they will eat lunch with. To help ease their worries and facilitate a smooth transition, it would be helpful if you are able to assist in some of the following ways:

- Know the enrollment procedures in the town where the child will be going to school. Make sure all the necessary documents and records (at a minimum, health immunizations, transcripts, special education records, discipline records, DCF mittimus, foster parent's proof of residence) are received by the school to facilitate enrollment. Lack of up-to-date health records and discipline records can delay enrollment.
- Use the Notice to LEA form to notify school district(s) of student's move and to request that records be sent to the new district.
- If the child is homeless or in a STARR or TCU program, talk to the McKinney-Vento homeless coordinator in the school district to ensure a speedy enrollment. Records are not needed for a child to begin school if they qualify for McKinney-Vento services and the districts are responsible for providing transportation.
- Talk to the principal, school social worker, adjustment counselor and/or guidance counselor prior to or upon enrollment to highlight the student's successes and strengths and to share concerns and challenges.
- If student has an Individual Education Program (IEP), make sure that it is current and that the new district will be providing the services identified in the document.
- In partnership with the foster parent or provider, assure that the student has access to all available support services, after-school recreational/sports activities, programs and tutoring and transportation.
- Request a mentor or "peer buddy" for student to minimize confusion and to assist in the transition, if the school has a program like this.
- Make sure children have the name, address and phone number of their foster parent on a card in their backpack for safety and for school.
- Check-in with the student, foster parent or provider and, if possible, with the school after the first two weeks of school, to make sure everything went okay and that the student is settling in well.
- Don't forget to give the student encouragement! S/he may not show how difficult the transition is, but are probably experiencing a sense of loss and sadness with all the changes. [ [top](#) ]

## ICPM: Orientation and Training Sessions Underway

The Department has been providing orientation sessions for social workers, supervisors, and Area Program Managers on the new Integrated Casework Practice Model (ICPM). A series of ten sessions have been scheduled between August 5 and September 18 and approximately 1,300 staff will have participated. All resource materials from the orientation sessions are now posted on the DCF Intranet.

Regional Coaches are in place to provide additional training and coaching in the Area Offices. The coaches are working with Regional Directors to identify training needs and to provide additional training on the ICPM over the coming months. Regional Coaches and the Regional Facilitators are available to answer questions as they arise during implementation of the new model. Staff are encouraged to contact their coach or facilitator with questions on the practice model. Listed below are the Coaches and the Facilitators for each Region.

	<b>Regional Coach</b>	<b>Regional Facilitator</b>
West	Shellie Taggart	Faye Drain
Central	Sophia Chin	Margie Simone
Northeast	Heather Meitner	Kathy Payton
Metro	Phil Decter	Stefanie Brynen
Southeast	Jean Burnie-Murphy	Cory Oliveira
Boston	John Vogel	Janis Lynch

Training on the Danger and Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment tools has been scheduled for supervisors for September 16, 17, 29 and 30. Area Directors are in the process of registering supervisors for these trainings. In addition, we will be scheduling a series of technical assistance calls with Children's Research Center to provide an opportunity for staff to call in and ask questions about the tools. These technical assistance calls will be scheduled for the beginning of October. Information on how to participate will be posted on the DCF intranet over the coming weeks. [ [top](#) ]

## Youth Leadership Institute a Success!

The inaugural session of the Department's annual Youth Leadership Institute was held on August 19th and 20th. Forty youth from across the state attended this two day event designed to enhance youths' communication and presentation skills, advance their leadership skills and foster teamwork. The Institute included leadership building activities, workshops on strategic sharing, and effective communication.

The evaluations were overwhelmingly positive with youth expressing greater confidence in their ability to represent their peers at the Youth Advisory Board meetings, as

## Implementation of Area Board Development

Last year, the Act Protecting Children in the Care of the Commonwealth reaffirmed the commitment of state government to have community boards established that advise the work of each DCF Area Office. Many DCF offices have had a longstanding tradition of Area Boards and this has presented a timely opportunity for all of our offices to enhance or establish this structure that brings the voice of the community to the work of child welfare.

Currently, in every Area Office, nominating committees are actively recruiting candidates to sit on Area Boards that will be comprised of 23 members. Families formerly involved with DCF, foster and adoptive families, kin and youth are of particular interest, as are providers and other state agencies that provide services to persons with mental health, developmental disabilities, or who might be in need of financial assistance to meet basic needs. Members of DCF's SEIU Local 509, the business community and faith-based practitioners may also be asked to bring their unique perspectives to the table.

Area Boards will tackle questions that relate to:

- Local legislative issues;
- Public Affairs;
- Quality Improvement; and
- Community Connectedness.

It is our goal to have the initial membership of each board identified and sworn in before the end of December. If you know someone who might be interested in serving on an Area Board, please speak to your local Area Director, Area Administrative Manager, or Regional Community Support Manager. [ [top](#) ]

youth representatives on Area Boards, at MAPP training and foster parent recruitment events, conferences and other internal and external venues. The youth set goals for their Advisory Boards this year and shared their expectations for future leadership opportunities.

Many thanks to Maureen Messeder, Michelle Banks, Lisa Ciullo, and all the Outreach staff who diligently planned and executed the Institute.

For more information about future Youth Leadership Institute activities, contact Maureen Messeder at 617-748-2231. [ [top](#) ]

## More than 1,000 Families Enrolled in ICC Services

On June 30th, Community Service Agencies (CSAs), the organizations that deliver Intensive Care Coordination and Family Support and Training, began providing services to MassHealth children, youth and their families. Since that time, the MassHealth Health Plans have reported that more than 1,000 families are in the beginning stages of receiving Intensive Care Coordination services.

During the beginning “engagement” phase of this service, families work with Care Coordinators and Family Partners to complete a “strengths and needs” discovery and start building their child’s ICC Team. In the experience of Wraparound programs nationally, as well as CFFC and MHSPY in Massachusetts, some number of families will decide during this process that ICC is not for their family. In September, CBHI will begin to report data on the number of families that enroll beyond the engagement phase.

Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) is a care-coordination service for children and youths with serious emotional disturbance (SED). Children, teens and young people most likely to benefit from ICC services may include: those with complex needs involving many providers or state agencies; families of children or youth who have frequent behavioral health crises; and children or youth in families that have been “difficult to engage” in other services. [ [top](#) ]

## ESP Network Delivering Mobile Crisis Intervention

On June 30th, all of the newly chosen Emergency Service Providers (ESPs) began delivering round-the-clock Mobile Crisis Intervention services to MassHealth-enrolled children, teens and young adults under the age of 21. In the first two weeks of operation the ESP network provided nearly 600 mobile crisis encounters involving MassHealth members under age 21. Mobile Crisis, Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) and Family Support and Training (Family Partners) are three new MassHealth behavioral health programs launched by the MassHealth HealthPlans in late June. [ [top](#) ]

## MassHealth Plans Roll Out Remaining New Services

MassHealth Health Plans are working closely with provider organizations to roll-out the remaining new services: In-Home Behavioral, Therapeutic Mentoring and In-Home Therapy. Two services, In-Home Behavioral and Therapeutic Mentoring, will begin on October 1st. In-Home Therapy will begin the following month, on November 1st. [ [top](#) ]

## Moving Forward the Interagency Restraint Prevention Initiative

This past spring, agencies involved in the delivery of educational and rehabilitation services to children and youth came together to develop a strategy for promoting the use of trauma informed positive behavioral support practices and preventing the use of restraint and seclusion in residential and public school settings. In May, the committee sponsored an event that convened more than 200 executives from residential programs, state agency representatives and child advocates to kick off the initiative. Commissioners from each of the sponsoring state agencies spoke to attendees about the importance of the work and why it must be taken up and given sustained focus.

For DCF, it is about providing a safe environment for our youth to recover and learn, and to help them to more quickly gain internal controls over trauma induced behaviors that impeded their progress toward permanency. Massachusetts’ DMH programs that have incorporated trauma informed positive behavioral support practices have significantly shorter lengths of stay and less recidivism. We believe that these outcomes can be replicated in our community residential programs.

Since the meeting in May, a Steering Committee has been formed that includes state agency representatives, child advocacy representatives, provider agencies and several youth that have experienced residential treatment. With financial and technical assistance from Casey Family Programs, the Committee will sponsor a statewide training for senior managers of provider agencies on how to develop an organizational culture and strategic plan that incorporates these progressive practices into their work. This two day training will be provided at no cost to participants, and will be delivered by nationally recognized experts using curriculum developed by the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. State agencies will be provided with a limited number of slots to the training as well. Stay tuned for more information.

For more information, or for a copy of the newly established ‘Restraint Prevention Initiative Charter,’ please contact Assistant Commissioner Bob Wentworth at: [Robert.Wentworth@state.ma.us](mailto:Robert.Wentworth@state.ma.us) [ [top](#) ]

## Fatherhood Engagement Initiative

As a follow up to the June 24 cross training DCF-DOC Conference: **Family Connections for Incarcerated Parents and Their Children**, we will be scheduling tours of DOC facilities for DCF staff throughout the state. This will happen in September and October.

The goal is to develop relationships between the two institutions, and for DCF to better understand how to

arrange visitation for children in our care and how to take advantage of DOC educational and therapeutic offerings for incarcerated parents. If you are interested please contact either of the co-chairs of the Incarcerated Parents Work Group: Joan Stiles [joan.stiles@state.ma.us](mailto:joan.stiles@state.ma.us) or Fernando Mederos ([fernando.mederos@state.ma.us](mailto:fernando.mederos@state.ma.us)).  
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## Announcements

### Staff Given Praise

Thank you, IT Staff for all of your work around the Integrated Casework Practice Model!

The Internet Information Technology Staff has been working tirelessly to roll out new innovations and development to support the ICPM. Thank you for your work!

### Art Wanted!

Do you have a budding artist on your caseload? We are looking for art work from any child involved with the agency to grace our office walls in central office to make us smile, laugh or to remind us that despite the many challenges that our children face daily, they are creative, expressive, talented and resilient. In exchange for the art, we will give each child a small art inspired gift. Please contact Susan Stelk for more information and details at 617 748-2340 (x72340) [susan.stelk@state.ma.us](mailto:susan.stelk@state.ma.us)

### Adoption Recruitment Event for Older Children and Sibling groups

The Adoption Option sponsored and hosted by **Jordan's Furniture** will be held on Sunday, September 27, 2009 at their Reading store. Interested families will be able to talk directly to social workers, meet our waiting children, and learn about the adoption process. There will be breakfast refreshments and family fun, including face painting, juggling, balloon animals, Liquid Fireworks and more! For more information please contact the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) at: 617.54.ADOPT (or) [www.mareinc.org](http://www.mareinc.org)

### 3rd Annual DCF Friends of Foster Care Touch-A-Truck Event



The Friends of Foster Care, in collaboration with DCF's Coastal Office are holding their third annual Touch-A-Truck event

on October 18, 2009 from 12-3 PM at the Chapman Middle School in Weymouth. This wonderful event features all kinds of vehicles from police, fire and ambulance to tow trucks, construction equipment, race cars, cranes and a school bus--all of which can be touched, climbed on and horns beeped by the kids ... and all for a great cause!

The proceeds of the event are used to benefit the many children on the South Shore who are currently in DCF foster care.

Other attractions at the event will include: face painting, character appearances, refreshments, raffles and the 2004 and 2007 Red Sox World Series Trophies where families can have their Fan Photo taken with the trophies and Wally the Green Monster.

Tickets are \$5.00 per person, children ages one and under are free, with a maximum of \$15.00 per family. [ top ]

## Contact Information

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