

12/26/18 – DCYF Termination of Kinship Support Contracts

DCYF has terminated its kinship support contracts with community-based agencies, including the one with Children's Friend. This change will take effect shortly, and has caused confusion and concern. This statement is intended to clarify the impact of this change and allay these concerns.

- This change affects only kinship support services.
 - Of course, kinship support services are very important – they keep kids safe, and close to the family they have grown up with and know. They support grandparents and others who step up when parents cannot support their children.
 - However, all other services provided by CFS - including adoption and foster care services - remain in place.
 - All families served by Children's Friend who will be impacted by this change have been notified.
- While the annual maximum of the contract was \$3 million, DCYF only paid CFS \$700,000 over the past year.
 - CFS could only provide kinship services to families referred and authorized by DCYF.
 - DCYF failed to refer families, and utilization never exceeded 25%.
 - CFS provided kinship support to over 60 families under this contract since inception.
- Our major concern is whether DCYF has the infrastructure and staffing to provide kinship supports directly within the prescribed timeframe.
 - We are very proud of the comprehensive, timely, effective, multilingual, and culturally appropriate services and supports our Kinship Support Team provided to benefit kids, families, DCYF, and our state overall.
 - Despite the pride we have in our work, we understand that DCYF has the right to end community-based contracts and provide these services directly, especially since DCYF promised that “no services are going away and no families are losing services.”
 - However, due to the high number of fatalities and near fatalities these past few years, the chaos and turnover in staffing at DCYF, and the poor results of the recently released federal CFSR review of DCYF, it would seem that DCYF has enough to work through without creating a new unit and providing an additional service directly, especially within the next few weeks.
 - We expressed these concerns to DCYF leadership and requested additional transition time; despite this DCYF affirmed their intent to move forward by January 31, 2019.

While we will no longer provide kinship support services directly, we consider it our mission and responsibility to ensure that our kinship families continue to receive those services. We will stay in touch with families we have been serving. If they do not receive the services and supports they have been receiving and need, we will privately and publicly advocate to ensure that all kinship families in Rhode Island are properly supported.

Thank you for your concern and your support of the work of Children's Friend to protect the youngest and most vulnerable children in Rhode Island.