

NH Department of Health and Human Services
129 Pleasant Street – Hugh Gallen State Office Park
Concord, NH 03301

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
Public Information Office
603-271-9389 or pio@dhhs.nh.gov

Second Annual DCYF Data Book Shows Stability of DCYF Workforce, Decrease in Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) has released the second DCYF Annual Data Book. The DCYF Annual Data Book 2020 presents and analyzes key information on DCYF’s child protection, foster and adoptive care, juvenile justice, and community and family support programs.

“When I took office in 2017, we made children a top priority and rebuilt our DCYF system,” said Governor Chris Sununu. “We created a new set of standards, made the right investments, and have exceeded expectations with our outcomes. Of particular note, our caseworker hiring and retention are greatly improving, the number of foster families in our state are increasing, and families are taking advantage of the voluntary services that we brought back online. While this is something we can all be proud of, we know we have more work to do.”

“We are encouraged by what the data is showing as we continue to make progress in our child and family systems transformation,” said DHHS Commissioner Lori Shibinette. “Ensuring that we have the staff we need to meet the needs of New Hampshire families is a critical component of a strong and healthy system, and we are pleased to see that our recruitment efforts have been paying off.”

The Annual Data Book shows that, for the first time ever, DCYF’s child protection workforce is approaching national caseload standards. Currently, the average number of assessments per Child Protective Service Worker (CPSW) is 16, down from 90 in 2016. Legislation passed in recent years, including SB 592, SB 6, and HB 3, has provided an opportunity for DCYF to fund additional CPSW and supervisor positions over the past two years. As a result of these new positions and a reduction in staff turnover, DCYF’s workforce includes the largest number of CPSWs and supervisors ever.

The data also reflect that, for the second consecutive year, a decline in the number of children in out-of-home care and an increase in the number of children being cared for in their own homes and with their own families. Children exiting out of home care continue to outpace entries.

Other highlights from the Data Book include an increase in the number of foster homes and a decrease in the number of assessments involving caregivers struggling with substance use

disorder for the first time since 2015. A special section of the Data Book shows the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child protection and juvenile justice systems.

“Data serves as an important tool that helps us measure our progress,” said DCYF Director Joseph E. Ribsam. “The data we collect lets us know what is working for New Hampshire families, and where we may be facing challenges. It is important to share this data with our partners, stakeholders and policy makers, so we can all continue to make the best possible decisions to ensure that New Hampshire’s children, youth and families can thrive.”

To read the DCYF Data Book, please visit <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/documents/dcyf-data-book-2020.pdf>.

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