

**Governor's Council on Pathways from Poverty:
Public Hearing on the Department for Children and Families (DCF)**

Summary of Recommendations from August 28, 2014

- Cuts in respite care for families, across programs, is problematic, increase those resources
- Continue IFS pilots- time consuming but serving families
- Be cognizant of increased housing costs- supports aren't keeping pace with need, increase those if possible
- Create a watchdog organization for people to go to if they want to discuss what is happening with Family Services and their families
- Decrease the amount of time between an initial investigation and when a family gets to have its say in court
- Increase the degree of interaction between DCF and MH agencies
- Increase the degree of investment in and involvement with communities related to child protection
- Identify an outside government body to ensure that procedures and practices in Family Services are being followed
- Review the prohibition that prohibits child care providers from being foster parents
- Family Services should refer to itself as Family Services, not DCF
- Safety and well-being of children and families must be a community problem with community solutions, not owned by a government entity
- Confidentiality rules should be examined to ensure they are not keeping the community out unnecessarily- need to protect privacy and build community teams
- Need to improve quality of the legal representation for parents involved with Family Services- uneven quality across the state
- Need to improve quality of ESD worker response- perhaps one worker per family
- Differential response has created the opportunity for no response- need to review and ensure that families are getting necessary support

- More training on trauma, the impact of child abuse, developmental trauma, child development
- FSD workers need to better understand how to engage families
- Worker response to risk of harm needs to be quicker
- Need to set expectations around personal interactions with families; they need to require personal contact
- Teams around children should rely on a diverse set of skills and expertise
- Better support for supervisors to better support social workers
- Address the fear that families have being involved with Family Services
- Review the dual role of social workers that need families to trust them and can also investigate and take children away
- Need to revisit the policies around Reach Up sanctions
- Need the organization to be centrally grounded- including strong supervisors
- Address district office supervision and the quality of supervision overall