September 2019

The Vision

News and updates from and about the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services
Eric T. Clark, Commissioner

Guest Columnist: Melissa Goins

Greetings from the Family Resource and Youth Service Center Family!

I am Melissa Goins and I recently began my sixth year as the director of the Division of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSC) at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. I am honored to have the opportunity to address Kentucky's child welfare, family support, and child care partners directly as we share in our goals and mission to support KY families.

Many of you have the opportunity to intersect with your FRYSCs regularly, but still, due to several circumstances in our complex work, we find opportunities to re-orient and build upon our current knowledge and experience to better serve families. I hope you will allow me to take such an opportunity as I introduce the role of the FRYSC to many of you.

FRYSCs, located in almost 1,200 schools across our state, have the distinct role of addressing barriers to learning that are related to a child's environment, family functioning, health, and other factors that are non-cognitive in nature. We focus on responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences by building protective factors that decrease vulnerability, which includes doing what we can to support parents, caregivers, relatives, and foster parents in ways that strengthen resiliency.

Given that each FRYSC is a bit different due to the nuances of local communities, the best way to find out specific activities associated with your local center is to

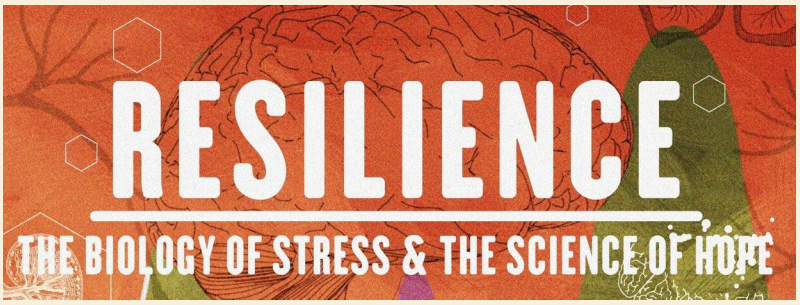
FRYSCs Director Melissa Goins

ask your FRYSC! Better yet, attend a FRYSC advisory council meeting to get a full picture of the specific needs and priorities of the center.

It is possible that many of the families you serve are familiar to the FRYSC in your local community and meaningful communication is something that we can all do to increase the quality of our work. We encourage our FRYSCs to make contact with all community partners because, like you, we understand the importance of strong professional relationships in this line of work!

In closing, I want to thank you for what you do. Many days are tough but there are also successes. Hold on to those successes. Remind our colleagues and friends of their successes when they feel fatigue creeping in. Know that FRYSCs, as part of the child welfare system, are here to do our part. We are stronger together!

Best,
Melissa Goins, Director
Family Resource and Youth Services Centers



Documentary screening Sept. 17

A screening and panel discussion of the documentary "Resilience" is 9-11 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 17, in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex, 702 Capitol Ave., Frankfort. Get information and register at 502-564-3703, ext. 3800 or at https://www.bouncelouisville.org/events/resilience-documentary-screening-and-discussion

FRYSCs: Did you know?

Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSC) and DCBS can work together to support families! Did you know:

- FRYSCs can connect families to early childhood education options.
- FRYSCs can advocate for your families in IEP meetings.
- FRYSCs can connect families to additional community supports.
- FRYSCs may offer support groups or other opportunities specific to relatives raising relatives.
- FRYSCs coordinate interventions such as grief groups, self-esteem groups, and connecting students with mentors that help to build resiliency and promote positive mental health.
- Most FRYSCs have received training specific to the impact of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- FRYSCs offer year-round services, including summer and before/after school care.

- There are 856 centers in total statewide, at least one in every county!
- FRYSCs rely heavily on community support and partnerships, including their local DCBS offices.

Most Importantly. . . Do you know your local FRYSC?

FRYSCs may already have strong relationships with the families you are working with – combining efforts and increasing communication will be most impactful for families we serve. Visit our website to learn more about FRYSC and find a center near you: https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dfrcvs/dfrysc/Pages/default.aspx

Child Care

- The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) will conduct a federal monitoring visit to review Kentucky's compliance with the Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant (CCBG) November 5-7. The DCBS Division of Child Care (DCC) had its first pre-visit call July 15. The second pre-visit call is scheduled for September 25.
- DCC management team members traveled to Arlington (VA) July 29 – August 1 to participate in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State & Territories Administrators Meeting. Leadership learned about key changes to the Child Care Development Block Grant under the 2014 reauthorization and heard from other states and territories across the country about best practices and shared successes.
- Child Care Aware (CCA) Health and Safety and Quality coaches in the Northern Bluegrass, Southern Bluegrass, Salt River, and Jefferson Regions are working on a collaborative research project with the University of Kentucky and the University of North Carolina to look at the impact of Go NAPSACC. Go NAPSACC provides online tools and resources to support child care centers in adopting healthy eating and physical activity practices. Exposing young children to healthy lifestyle choices is important as good habits that happen early can carry into adulthood. Plans for sustainability of this project include collaborative work between the DCC and the Department for Public Health to ensure that Go NAPSACC online is available and supported through technical assistance from CCA coaches statewide. To learn more about the resources available through Go NAPPSACC visit https://gonapsacc.org/.

Child Care

- As of August 22, 2019, 48,491 child care staff member background checks have been initiated, and 40,578 background checks have been completed through the National Background Check Program.
- The W.K Kellogg grant for expanding quality family child care throughout the state of Kentucky is moving forward. We are excited to announce all five pilot projects have been approved.

DCC and Child Care Aware hosted a table at the State Fair on August 17. Staff provided fun activities for children and educated parents on options to search for quality child care.

- Pilot project members met on August 8 to create a cohesive message to be promoted statewide. The messaging focuses on the importance of quality early education and the workforce impact quality care provides.
- Many communities are in full swing of hosting family community events and activities. Pilot projects will be joining in these festivities. The pilot projects look forward to providing information to families on quality family child care and the importance of early education.
- The Build Initiative, along with pilot project team members, will be hosting a webinar September 16 to introduce and explain the Early Head Start/Family Child Care Partnership framework with community agencies and Head Start Grantees across the state.
- ECE-TRIS continues to explore and develop programmatic changes to support partnering agency staff who review professional development hours. These changes are targeted to reduce duplication of effort and improve efficiency for processing credentials, licensing reviews, and KY All STARS audits. A specific focus of their work is the collection of education information for early childhood professionals. ECE-TRIS and CCA coaches are collaborating in this effort to communicate the benefits of including education
- information on teachers' professional development portfolios in ECE-TRIS. ECE-TRIS staff are contributing to several subcommittees to support the Preschool Development Grant activities as administered by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood.
- The Kentucky All STARS Program has had two successful August releases within the Kentucky Integrated Child Care System (KICCS). The first release was to streamline the All STARS Incentive process by removing
- repetitive procedures. The early results have shown a quicker turnaround for All STARS Incentive Payments. The second release focused on provider notifications. Previously, providers would receive notifications and
- correspondence via mail. Now providers are receiving an email informing them they have All STARS correspondences on the Provider Portal. This allows the provider to log into their portal accounts and view any pending All STARS correspondences as soon as it is available.
- The DCBS-Division of Child Care continues to dedicate staffing resources to the Preschool Development Grant activities as administered by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood.
- The Division of Child Care and Child Care Aware hosted a table at the State Fair on August 17! Our staff shared in fun activities for children while staff promoted the Benefind Child Care Provider Search and educated parents on options to search for quality child care.
- The Division of Child Care was requested to present with the Department for Public Health and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood on the use of Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement funds for oversight committee's September meeting.

Protection and Permanency: Adult Services

- The Division of Protection and Permanency (DPP), Adult Services Branch and the Office of Legal Services continue to have ongoing meetings to examine applicable definitions in an attempt to clarify interpretations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation in a proposed amendment to administrative regulation, 922 KAR 5:070.
- Adult Services Branch staff along with DPP leadership met with Medicaid staff to discuss collaborating to develop a revised MOU between the two departments.
- DCBS leadership and the Adult Services Branch met the Office of the Ombudsman in August to review and discuss trends that are occurring in administrative hearings/appeals in Adult Protective Services findings.

Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- The Child Welfare Transformation (CWT) Phase 2 included the launch of workgroups with a focus on reviewing data and crafting a tracking process to enhance the quality assurance for strategies implemented in phase one. Additionally, the initial planning meetings for restructuring of the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process began and included representation from the Commissioner's Office, Division of Service Regions (DSR), DPP, and inputs from the field in the form of written feedback and ideas for a new process.
  - Technical assistance meetings are scheduled to begin in September 2019 between Casey Family Programs and the CWT internal leadership team. These meetings are for the purpose of reviewing the outcomes of the strategic planning meeting and to ensure strategies are aligned with the department's three priority goals: Safely Reduce the Number of Children Entering OOHC, Reduce Caseloads, and Improve Timeliness to Appropriate Permanency.
  - The current project management structure is in the process of transitioning to a teaming approach that will align with the new CQI process, inclusive of ongoing stakeholder engagement throughout all levels of the agency. Theworkgroups will continue to transition toward becoming data-informed, outcome driven, and solution focused. The workgroups determined the scope and focus of their work, the key performance measures the group will track, and reviewed membership to ensure the appropriate individuals and stakeholders were reflected. They held their initial convening on the following dates; Fiscal Modernization will convene in September 2019:
    - August 8, the Permanency Workgroup; Respective strategies from the "Foster Care and Adoption," Transition Aged Youth" and "Relative Supports" workgroups are merged into this workgroup;
    - August 8, the Out of Home Care Supports; Respective strategies from the "Foster Care and Adoption," "Transition Aged Youth" and "Relative Placement Supports" are merged into this workgroup;
    - August 22, Workforce Supports;
    - August 27; Prevention Supports; and
    - August 27, Judicial Engagement
- The Permanency Workgroup meeting on August 8 included much conversation focused on the 202 report and the accuracy of the permanency data. As a result, two Customer Service Requests (CSR) have been submitted to TWIST. One request is to allow for information to be entered into the agency cases so that more information can be captured and the data can be more reliable. This will be helpful in noting situations where the TPR has been appealed. The other CSR will allow for the presentation summary approval date to be documented. It is important to note when the presentation summary has been approved as yearly updates are required.
- On August 21, 2019, at the National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit in Washington D.C., the CWT lead and Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) lead, presented alongside of Chapin Hall, Kentucky's CWT with a specific focus on the FFPSA provider readiness assessment. Kentucky is the first state to utilize a provider readiness assessment of this caliber to prepare the child welfare agency and provider system for Family First implementation.

Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- Throughout the month of August, DCBS continued its efforts to prepare for implementation of the FFPSA in October 2019. On August 23, 2019, DCBS submitted its Title IV-E Prevention Services Plan for review to the Children's Bureau.

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- Throughout the month of August, DCBS continued its efforts to prepare for implementation of the FFPSA in October 2019. On August 23, 2019, DCBS submitted its Title IV-E Prevention Services Plan for review to the Children's Bureau.
- On August 20, 2019, a Contract Correspondence Transmittal (CCT) was sent to PCC/PCP providers advising of challenges with timely implementation of the Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) requirements of FFPSA. The barriers to successful implementation have been shared with our federal partners at the Children's Bureau as well as congressional delegates. DCBS has been advised that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is working on resolving the issue and congressional staff from the Committee On Ways and Means along with the Senate Finance Committee are also working to support a resolution if CMS is unable to do so.
- DCBS has issued 28,891 foster care maintenance payments totaling $24.6 million through August 30 in application of the D.O. v. Glisson ruling to other like cases.
- Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Team (START) Directors and START family mentors transitioned to the University of Kentucky College of Social Work's Training Resource Center in August 2019.
- The Herald-Leader interviewed a START family mentor for an upcoming story related to the FFPSA.
- The START Director attended a meeting hosted by the Millbank Memorial Fund in Kansas City, Missouri with other Kentucky representatives. The meeting was entitled "Sustaining Families Impacted by Addiction."
- Dr. Martin Hall and Dr. Matt Walton of the University of Louisville START evaluation team in partnership with the START Director presented at the Child Welfare Evaluation Summit in Washington, D.C. The session was titled "Kentucky's Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams: A Propensity Score-Matched Outcome Study."
- The START supervisors and START Clinical Director attended an Advanced Motivational Interviewing training.
- Standards of Practice are being updated, and practice guidance is being provided, regarding how appeals of the termination of parental rights impact the presentation summary packets and how the worker should proceed with the completion of this work.
- The System Safety Review Team finalized the annual Child Fatality/Near Fatality Governor's Report in August for submission to the Governor on September 1.
- The Recovery Oriented System of Care Summit for Fayette County was held on August 15, 2019. Strategies were discussed for community partners to become recovery oriented in the work we do. Future meetings will focus on ways to collaborate across agencies and organizations to ensure families are served and supported by best practices surrounding recovery.
- The diligent recruitment committee has refocused their efforts. The multiple workgroups have been reduced to two, Retention and Targeted Recruitment. In addition, the Diligent Recruitment position will be effective September 1 and will provide guidance to the field in developing their recruitment plans in these focused areas.

Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- The Culture of Safety implementation continues with intensive focus on the child fatality/near fatality internal review process. The System Safety Review Team (formerly the Fatality Unit) is fully staffed as of August 16 with four System Safety Analysts and an Administrative Specialist under the supervision of an Assistant Director. The new System Safety Review Team in DPP worked with Collaborative Safety to finalize a review process manual, forms, policy, and the membership in the collaboration meetings that are required by the process. Leadership institutes for the Culture of Safety were completed in August. Implementation of the new child fatality/near fatality review model is scheduled for October 1.
- The Foster Adoptive Parent Training Steering Committee has begun meeting. This group include DCBS staff and university training partners: Eastern Kentucky University, University of Kentucky, and Murray State University. Focus on training quality and outcomes is the goal of the group, which intends to meet quarterly.
- The Transitional Services Branch has worked with the Commissioner's Office to draft a news release on Kentucky's new LYFT partnership to be issued soon.
- DCBS will be submitting a Request for Application (RFA) for the Youth Villages program, YV Lifeset, to be implemented in Kentucky. The purpose of the program is to achieve better life outcomes for transition-age youth in out of home care. If Kentucky is awarded funds, the program will enhance the impact of services being offered to older youth in Kentucky. The grant funds can be used to support research, evaluation, and technical assistance. The RFA is due on October 1.
- A contract with Children's Home of Northern Kentucky (CHNKY) is currently pending to provide additional Family Preservation services in three Northern Kentucky counties. DPP requested an expedited contract to begin no later than September 15.
- DPP and Eastern Kentucky University partnered during the month of August to develop a web-based training for FFPSA for field staff. The training will focus on new in-home case planning requirements, evidence based practices definitions, and the new process for submission of Title IVE claims for prevention services.
- The 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan was submitted on June 28 to the Children's Bureau and is pending approval. Federal reviewer comments have been received with a state response anticipated in early September.
- The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to address findings from the federal Child and Family Services Review conducted in July 2016 was approved on April 1 by the Children's Bureau. PIP monitoring will continue for three years from the approval date.
  - The PIP safety workgroup has finalized selection of a national safety model to implement and work with the vendor will begin in the winter of 2019. The model will guide practice through all phases of casework. A safety model is a practice model used in child welfare that assists workers and supervisors assessing for safety and risk throughout multiple points in a case. A safety model will guide practice by utilizing evidenced based tools to guide decision making. Safety champions identified in each region will meet regularly with the core team as DCBS moves toward development and implementation.
  - During the August meeting, the safety workgroup continued discussion around the development and implementation of the safety model. Plans on automation of the model are continuing between Kentucky's state automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) team and NCCD Children's Research Center. It was also determined that DCBS will be working with Capacity Building Center for States on the threshold screening analysis. The threshold screening analysis allows jurisdictions to determine if they are screening in and out the right cases.

Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- The Clinical Services Branch has begun screening decertification notices from the Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs) to determine if DCBS has any concerns about the decertification. If there are concerns identified, these decertification notices are being forwarded to Dr. Lohr for a peer-to-peer consult with the MCO. This new process, which went into effect under the new MCO contracts in July, is anticipated to reduce the decertifications for acute psychiatric when DCBS is not in agreement. In August, the branch completed 28 reviews and 4 decertifications were avoided.
  - On August 28, there were 31 children decertified in their psychiatric placement settings. There were 32 Level of Care 3 children in residential. Through concerted efforts to identify appropriate treatment settings for these youth, these numbers are decreasing and are the lowest in five years.
- The Memorandum of Understanding is final with Kentucky's Kids Belong to promote adoption awareness for children registered with KAPE. The first filming is scheduled for September 19th in Louisville. Twelve KAPE children will be filmed and photographed at that time. Thursday's Child has made a donation to ensure that every child will receive a new outfit on this date. An email box has been established to ensure that all inquiries are answered in a timely manner and to allow for accurate reporting. This information was presented to the Service Region Administrators on August 12. The plan is for additional filming to occur every two to three months.
- Staff from the Adoption and Out of Home Care Branches attended the Adoption Call to Action Summit in Washington, D.C. on August 22 and 23.
- DPP is working with the cabinet's technology staff to automate the DPP-886a, which is currently known as the Application for Referral and Needs Assessment. The DPP-886a will soon be completed in iTWIST and submitted electronically to the Children's Review Program for placement search and request for level of care. This will allow information that is already stored in TWIST to auto-populate. The goal is for this project to be complete by the end of September.
- An amendment to 922 KAR 1:510, Authorization for disclosure of protection and permanency records, was filed on May 15, 2019, to condense three forms incorporated for requesting Protection and Permanency records into one form. The amendment includes email and fax as alternatives for submitting the record request form and requires a copy of a photo ID submitted with the record request for identification verification. Other updates were necessary for compliance with KRS Chapter 13A. No public comments were received on this amendment and the administrative regulation passed its first and second legislative committee reviews and went into effect on August 19, 2019.
- Emergency amendments were filed to 922 KAR 1:310, Standards for child-placing agencies; 922 KAR 1:350, Requirements for public child welfare agency foster parents, adoptive parents, and respite care providers; and 922 KAR 1:495, Training requirements for foster parents, adoptive parents, and respite care providers for children in the custody of the cabinet. These amendments were filed and effective immediately on April 1, 2019. The amendments incorporate new federal model standards for foster homes and establish a new foster home type referred to as "child specific foster homes," which are designed for relative or fictive kin caregiver placements. The amendments include lessened requirements, a per diem, and a waiver review process for the new child specific foster home type. Comments were received on these administrative regulations during the public comment period that ended on May 31, 2019, and the administrative regulations were further amended. These three administrative regulations passed their first of two legislative committee reviews in August. The amended after comments versions are expected to go into effect in September.
- Emergency and ordinary amendments were filed to 922 KAR 1:320, Service appeals, on July 1, 2019, with the emergency regulation taking effect immediately. The amendment to this administrative regulation aligns appeals and complaint procedures with 2019 Ky. Acts ch. 073 and 033, House Bills 2 and 158 from the 2019 Regular Session respectively, and makes other technical corrections in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A. More specifically, the amendment incorporates the new service array for relative and fictive kin caregivers, new service and notice provision to foster parents, and the foster youth bill of rights. This amendment is in the public comment period through August.
- Amendments were filed to 922 KAR 1:560, Putative father registry, and 922 KAR 1:565, Service array for a relative or fictive kin caregiver, on July 11, 2019. These amendments are necessary for consistency with legislation that passed in the 2019 Regular Session, specifically House Bills 2, 158, and 446. These proposed amendments are in the public comment period through August.

Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- Emergency and ordinary amendments were filed to 922 KAR 1:330, Child protective services, on August 14, 2019, with the emergency regulation taking effect immediately. The amendment to this administrative regulation adds to the definition of “caretaker” consistent with recently passed legislation to include a person in a position of authority or special trust. The amendment changes this administrative regulation by including and defining the term “no finding” as a possible outcome for an investigation regarding an allegation that has been found to be erroneous or false. Additionally, the proposed ordinary administrative regulation amends the screening acceptance criteria to provide greater clarity. This amendment is in the public comment period through October.

Deputy Commissioner Elizabeth Caywood, Protection and Permanency Director Christa Bell, and Legislative Liaison Laura Begin testified before the Child Welfare Oversight and Advisory Committee on Aug. 19 about recent changes to foster care and adoption in the Commonwealth, focusing on House Bill 1 (RS2018) and other legislation and data relating to foster care and adoption.

- Deputy Commissioner Elizabeth Caywood, Protection and Permanency Director Christa Bell, and Legislative Liaison Laura Begin, testified before the Child Welfare Oversight and Advisory Committee on recent changes to foster care and adoption in the Commonwealth, focusing on House Bill 1 (RS2018) and other impactful pieces of legislation and data relating to foster care and adoption. Many questions were asked, and more data were requested that DPP and the Commissioner’s Office is working to provide.
- The public hearing for the Federal Fiscal Year 2020 Social Services Block Grant application was held during the August meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Health, Welfare, and Family Services. A summary of the grant was provided and no comments were received.

Family Support

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) Steering Committee Presentations are continuing to focus on those resources that could be most beneficial to our five SNAP E&T Providers. This last month, the committee received information about Jobs for America’s Graduates as well as a demonstration on the FOCUS from the Kentucky Career Center. FOCUS is the state system for work registration with capabilities for candidate job matching based on education, skills, and work experience.
- Early in the month, the Division of Family Support (DFS) worked closely with DSR in hosting the DCBS Change Agents Network Forum, focusing heavily on how to more accurately input data in the system and what to expect from Quality Control (QC). QC Branch Manager, James Adkins, joined the Nutrition Assistance Branch manager, Brittany Neat, to present on standards for eligibility cases. This was done as part of an effort to lower error rates.
- DFS received the official results of the Management and Evaluation visit that had taken place in June. As expected, there were only a few areas in which U.S. Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) reported minimal findings, most of which are already corrected. FNS praised Kentucky DCBS for no able-bodied adult without dependent (ABAWD) findings during this fiscal Year 2019 review.
- DFS leadership held a wrap up of summer retreat activities. Through a process of mapping division values, expectations, and conflict points, DFS has developed some strategies for improving relationships with Field Staff, error rates, and customer service. A full presentation of findings and strategies will be given to the commissioner in early September.

- DFS has been working closely with Deloitte to prepare for trainings to take place in Eastern Kentucky around SNAP E&T. The staff in these eight counties being trained in September had previously been engaged with the Paths to Promise Study. Once these staff are trained in these areas, SNAP E&T program will be active in all 120 counties.
- In an effort to continually educate our staff on innovative practices within human services and to communicate the best practices here in Kentucky, several DFS staff have participated in national conferences in August. Program integrity Branch Manager, Wendy Cumpston, and Integrity and Analysis Section Supervisor Melissa Williams, are currently representing Kentucky at the United Conference on Welfare Fraud. Recently, Director Douglas Beard and Assistant Director Todd Trapp attended the American Association of SNAP Directors/National Association of TANF Administrators AASD/NASTA Annual Education Conference.
- The public hearing for the FFY 2020-2021 Community Services Block Grant application was held during the August meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Health, Welfare, and Family Services. A summary of the grant was provided and no comments were received.
- Family Support Director, Douglas Beard, and Deputy Commissioner Elizabeth Caywood presented on work and community engagement requirements for Medicaid and SNAP beneficiaries to the legislative Public Assistance Reform Task Force in August upon task force request. Deputy Commissioner Caywood serves as a member of the task force on behalf of DCBS.

General Operations

- An amendment to 922 KAR 1:470, Central registry, was filed on May 15, 2019, to reflect the move of the child abuse and neglect (CA/N) registry database to an electronic platform. This move will improve the efficiency of the cabinet's CA/N registry database background checks. Public comments were received during the public comment period and the administrative regulation and incorporated forms were further amended in response to comment. Changes in the form reflect changes being phased-in for the electronic platform. This administrative regulation will undergo its first legislative review in September.
- DCBS' short-form (summary) legislative proposals for Regular Session 2020 were approved by the Secretary's Office and the DCBS' legislative liaison drafted full legislative proposals and bill language with assistance from program experts. This draft legislation has been submitted to the Secretary's Office for review.
- DCBS's legislative liaison attended the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) conference in Nashville, TN, in August. Relevant sessions attended included information on benefit cliffs, early child care and being school ready, maternal and infant mortality crisis, KIDS COUNT, and the Family First Prevention Services Act. Taking place in Tennessee, a large number of Kentucky legislators attended as well.
- Records Management Section is processing most background checks within one week of receipt. In July, they processed the following:
  - 1,675 Foster/Adoptive Background Checks
  - 368 Kinship Background Checks
  - 6,590 Central Registry Checks
- Contracts Section processed 109 invoices for payment, submitted 5 contracts for modifications, submitted 6 contracts for execution, submitted 7 MOUs. They also completed 19 onsite monitoring visits during July and updated on contract monitoring tool, along with answering APA questions.
- The DSR has dedicated staff to emergency management planning and response state-level workgroups. DCBS is enhancing its Repatriation Program, which provides temporary financial support and social services to U.S. citizens re-entering the county, which can be on an emergency or non-emergency basis, including times of war or natural disaster.

General Operations

- DSR began piloting a new call services model for Centralized Intake starting July 15 in two Service Regions. DSR has successfully piloted this project in the Northern Bluegrass and Southern Bluegrass Service Regions.
- Due to the need for increased bandwidth in many of our CI sites, the complete roll out will not be completed until the end of the year. Three more regions (Northeastern, Eastern Mountain, and The Lakes) will be added in September.
- On August 16, job specifications for Family Support Specialist I, Case Management Specialist II and III were updated to include a substitution clause for all required education. This will allow promotional opportunity for experienced staff who were previously ineligible for the positions.
- Beginning January 2020, the employee performance evaluations will be automated in MyPurpose. The automation will streamline the evaluation process for supervisors. An online training for supervisors is expected during the fall.

Self-Care Corner

Here's another simple way to reduce stress: Read.

Though we have a lot of "required" reading every day (emails, policy manuals, family paperwork and bills), reading for pleasure can be a wonderful - and healthy - escape from the stress of everyday life.
Reading can even relax your body by lowering your heart rate and easing the tension in your muscles. A 2009 study at the University of Sussex found that reading can reduce stress by up to 68 percent, which is more than listening to music, drinking tea, or going for a walk. The reason, psychologists believe, is because reading takes you into another world where you are fully distracted from your troubles.

Here are some tips:

Read what you like. The book you pick doesn't have to be a bestseller. Pick a subject that captures your interest and lets your mind relax.

Help yourself. Try a self-help book or spiritual guide if you're interested.

Think outside the book. Fiction is a great escape, but you could choose a magazine, cookbook, how-to book, biography or travel guide instead of a narrative. If it helps your mind relax, it's the right pick.

Read for connection. If you feel really frazzled and can't quite concentrate on your book, start looking for a passage or a quote that resonates with you. That way you will focus more on what you are reading than any intrusive thoughts or pressures from your day.

Make time. Set aside 30 minutes to read in a quiet place where you won't be interrupted. Try to do this every day or at least four times a week.

Listen instead. Try listening to an audio book. Just follow the same tips as above – don't try to multi-task. The goal is relaxation and self-care!

Be social with us!
Follow and like @kydcbs on Facebook.
Follow @KyDCBS on Twitter.

Employee of the Month - Kelli Root

Kelli Root, Out of Home Care Branch Manager in the Division of Protection and Permanency, was selected CHFS Field Office Employee of the Month for June.

Kelli was named OOHC Branch Manager in July. Her nominator wrote that, in her previous position of Social Service Specialist in the Southern Bluegrass Region, she was already instrumental in the DCBS Child Welfare Transformation efforts by offering solutions and meeting tight deadlines in order to implement change.

Kelli led statewide diligent recruitment subcommittees and provided solutions to barriers for children in foster care receiving permanency and solutions to foster parents receiving appropriate supports. She was a vital team member in the development of the new KY FACES website.

In addition, Kelli has assisted in amending regulations to create a wider array of services for relatives, fictive kin and foster parents. This was all in addition to day-to-day support for frontline R and C workers.

Congratulations, Kelli! Get to know her better.

When people ask what you do, how do you describe it?
I usually say that I work to improve the services to our state's foster and adoptive families.

What are your favorite tasks related to your work?
I enjoy developing solutions that both improve services to families and support the front line staff.

What are your professional goals in your role?
I want to be a support to front line staff and help make positive changes in our system.

What was your strangest day on the job?
There are so many! It is hard to choose! Most strange days included some sort of contact with animals, including roosters, snakes, dogs, etc.

How do you and your coworkers celebrate each other and your successes?
We work so well as a team and we are proud of the work we each bring to the table. We also enjoy working with one another, which makes the process much smoother.

Out of Home Care Branch Manager Kelli Root

What is a challenge your team recently tackled?
Our team recently worked to develop the new child specific foster home type. It was a team effort and took many hours to implement and train staff statewide.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?
Seeing successes with our youth and families is the most rewarding part of any day.

How do you show support for front-line staff?
Staff must feel that you are on their team. It is important they know that they can come to you for advice, support, and encouragement without judgment. Taking the time staff needs and meeting them where they are is imperative. Every worker requires a different type of supervision. As a supervisor you have to learn that style for each person.

How does helping children achieve permanency make you feel?
This is one of the most important aspects of our work. I feel happy for the children and families and proud of staff.