



August 2020

The Vision

News and updates from and about the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services
Marta Miranda-Straub, Commissioner

From the Commissioner

As our department, the cabinet and our commonwealth move forward to build back better from the effects of the COVID-19 emergency and the magnification of racial disparities throughout society, I want to express my appreciation to all of you for your service and how you've been able to overhaul your work objectives and environments during this COVID-19 emergency.

I am still getting to know you and the agency structure, but I have discovered throughout the department a true dedication to our mission of serving families. Our intention is to create access, decrease barriers and provide the resources that our customers and staff need to succeed and thrive, in collaboration with our community partners.

Our partners at all levels are integral not only to our direct outreach with families, but also our mission to help them achieve their goals. To keep these connections strong, and to ensure all voices are included in our strategic planning, we are asking all partners - including customers - what has worked well, what we can do

Adult Protective Services

- APS branch liaison for the Local Coordinating Councils on Elder Abuse (LCCEA) continues monthly communication with the statewide councils. The first newsletter, "Staying Connected: Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness News" was distributed July 10, 2020, to the local councils and regional APS teams.

DCBS is seeking honest feedback from all stakeholders, including all advocates and customers, with our Build Back Better survey.

better and what their ideas are to strengthen our collaborations.

I welcome you to share this survey link to your office's partners and encourage their honest feedback:

<https://tinyurl.com/DCBSBBBSURVEY2020>

We do have an incredible opportunity to transform our agency from a 1950s model to a 21st-century DCBS. It's been an unexpected gift from these dual crises that we can redesign our programs -- decide what works that we can keep, and what doesn't work that we can cancel. We could not do this before.

I am excited for this prospect, and I love the different perspectives we all bring together to achieve this. Please continue to give input to me directly and through your directors, and stay tuned for more news on this transformation as we build back better.

Adult Protective Services

- New SOP Chapter 7 was released on June 29 and included news APS safety plans and prevention plans. The APS Safety, Prevention, and Aftercare planning web based training was launched this month.
- An amendment to 922 KAR 8:010 was filed on April 30, 2020. This administrative regulation was last amended in 2001 and is in need of many updates relating to rape crisis and mental health services, and updates necessary for statutory compliance. One comment was received during the public comment period ending July 31.
- Key Metrics:
 - The Adult Protection Branch received 37 Notices of Fatality between June 13 and July 16, 2020, and none reported to be COVID-19 related. The numbers have not increased in comparing 2019 data for the same time frame.
 - As of July 13, 2020, APS data for the total number of active APS reports compared to 2019 data shows there has been a 22% decrease.

Child Care

- In an effort to support Kentucky's child care centers via the CARES Act, the Kentucky All STARS Program has been processing stipends/bonuses to regulated child care providers and limited duration child care programs (LDC's) across the state. As of July 20, over \$44 million has been disbursed.
- Child Care Aware (CCA) continues to provide support for the required training for reopening child care. More than 15,600 providers have completed ECE 020: Requirements for Reopening Child Care in Kentucky. This training is offered at no cost to providers through HDI's Online Learning Center found at <https://hdilearning.org>. To support providers and follow Healthy at Work guidelines, CCA coaches are delivering technical assistance from a distance.
- ECE-TRIS staff have been collaborating with Kentucky Early Care and Education Credentialed Trainers, training agencies statewide, and organizations out of state, to ensure continuity in learning opportunities for early care and education professionals: 49,353 credit records have been added to ECE-TRIS from 16,928 distinct professionals. ECE-TRIS team members collaborated with Child Care Aware and DCC staff to create an import procedure to transfer approximately 15,823 records electronically.
- National Background Check Program (NBCP) - The new Child Abuse/Neglect (CAN) Payment and Verification online portal, which allows users to request a check of the CAN Registry electronically instead of with paper forms, has launched. Paper forms will no longer be accepted after July 31, 2020. Beginning August 1, 2020, all CAN Registry checks must be submitted through the online system. The improved process will help child care providers assess job applications more quickly and make staff and volunteer background checks easier for schools. (DCC continues to accept DCC-374 email requests until KARES resumes processing new applications).
- The Expanding High Quality Family Child Care (FCC) Initiative in Kentucky is currently implementing a rapid response plan to assist providers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team is working to increase awareness of the importance of regulated care and collaborating with local businesses on a new model. The Business and FCC business partnership model brings together local businesses, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, and family child care providers to build a partnership for employees' families. This partnership will bridge the gap in services for employees and employers across the state and allow families to access high-quality care in their neighborhood.
- Meeting held with Mississippi to discuss how they were able to decrease the CCAP error rate. Mississippi shared some resources with us that we are currently reviewing.
- Amendments to 922 KAR 2:090 and 2:100 (licensure and certification requirements for child care facilities and homes) were filed in October 2019 in order to include requirements on contract substitute child care center employees. These amendments also include a timeframe that is consistent for all employees to complete annual training beyond their first year (rather than one facility having a different training deadline for every staff member). These amendments passed legislative review and went into effect on July 29, 2020.

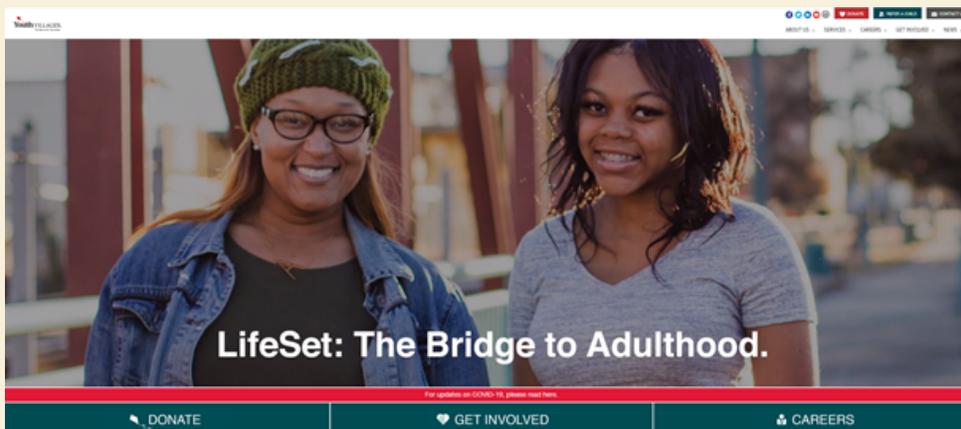


Child Care

- A new emergency administrative regulation, 922 KAR 2:400E, was filed on June 8, 2020, to include additional health and sanitation requirements for certified family child care homes and licensed child care centers that wish to reopen amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The administrative regulation underwent legislative committee reviews on July 13, 2020, and July 29, 2020, and has been affected by recent court orders, but is still in effect. The Kentucky Supreme Court will hear arguments for related litigation on September 17.
- Key Metrics:
 - As of July 23, there are approximately 10,865 families and 19,642 children receiving CCAP benefits.
 - DCBS has disbursed approximately \$97M to child care programs from Child Care and Development Fund and CARES Act funding since March 2020.
 - Positive COVID-19 Cases in Child Care as of 8/4/2020:
 - 79 staff
 - 59 children
 - 109 facilities

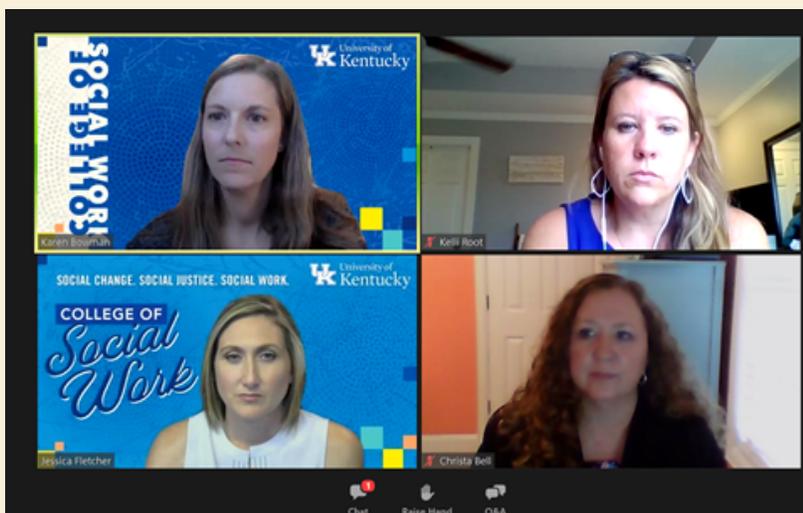
Protection and Permanency - Child Welfare

- The University of Kentucky College of Social Work (UK CoSW), in partnership with DCBS, is pleased to announce the launch of the Kentucky Kinship Information, Navigation, and Support (KY-KINS) program. KY-KINS is housed in the UK College of Social Work's Kentucky Kinship Resource Center and is aligned with the larger Kinship Navigator service array proffered by DCBS. In July, KY-KINS had kick-off meetings in the two pilot regions, Cumberland Service Region and the Salt River Trail Service Region.



- The Youth Villages LifeSet Program began on July 1, 2020. This is an intensive case management program for eligible youth transitioning from foster care. LifeSet will serve young people ages 17-21 who leave commitment or extend commitment and are placed in a DCBS foster home. The program is being piloted in two areas of the state and will serve youth in Bath, Boyle, Bullitt, Bourbon, Clark, Estill, Fayette, Garrard, Hardin, Henry, Jefferson, Jessamine, Lincoln, Madison, Meade, Mercer, Montgomery, Nelson, Oldham, Powell, Rockcastle, Scott, Shelby, Spencer and Woodford counties.

- Two Foster Parent Town Halls were hosted by the UK Training Resource Center for foster parents to ask questions surrounding the impact of COVID-19 on foster care and adoption. DCBS leadership participated on the panel on July 14 and July 22, 2020.



UK Training Resource Center's Foster Parent Town Halls featured, on screen right, Out of Home Care Branch Manager Kelli Root and Division of Protection and Permanency Director Christa Bell with UK staff. Also participating was DAFM Director Misty Sammons.

Protection and Permanency - Child Welfare

- DCBS is collaborating with Kentucky Department of Education to provide resources to families returning to school during COVID-19 as well as resources for staff in identifying signs of child maltreatment.
- The OOHC Branch has collaborated with AdoptUSKids to deliver training to Recruitment and Certification staff. An AdoptUSKids webinar developed specifically for Kentucky - Family Support and Retention will be held on August 4, 2020.
- The interviews for Fostering Success have been completed. The program will only operate in Louisville and Lexington this year. With many DCBS staff teleworking and the impact of COVID-19 on private employers, available worksites were limited.
- Eleven youth completed the Summer Skill Series program and earned \$300. Thirty-three youth are currently working through the second session which focuses on workplace readiness. Nineteen youth were selected for the Earn and Learn Program and are working with a specialist through Kentucky Community and Technical College Systems to be registered for a vocational program.
- New tuition waiver guidelines went into effect on July 15, 2020. Staff on the Transitional Services Branch have reached out to former recipients to advise of possible eligibility under the new criteria and are working with universities to process tuition waiver applications timely.
- The Cabinet and private child placing (PCP) agencies have signed an addendum to the current PCP contract, which will allow youth to stay in foster care past their twenty-first (21st) birthday. This will prevent youth from having to leave care during the current state of emergency. This addendum will remain in effect until September 30, 2020.
- The Cabinet filed an emergency amendment to 922 KAR 1:520&E. Supplements to per diem rates. The amendment to this administrative regulation establishes a parenting youth supplement that will be paid to a foster home or approved provider to aid in providing for the needs of the parenting youth's child or children. As a result, the Division of Protection and Permanency (DPP) issued subsequent policy related to practice changes for parenting youth. The Cabinet will no longer routinely seek custody of the child of a parenting teen in care in the absence of maltreatment.
- Kentucky's Just in Time website continues to be a support for foster parents and caregivers. In June, 825 training certificates were issued to foster parents across the state.
- On June 29, 2020, policy revisions were issued to include the new Safety, Prevention, and Aftercare planning policies, including the creation of Standards of Practice (SOP) Chapter 7. This issuance also referenced all policies, forms, and tip sheets that SOP Chapter 7 affects. Largely, the response has been positive. The web-based training for use of the safety, prevention, and aftercare plans is complete and has been released to regional staff.
- Revisions to SOP 1.5 and 2.11 involving the Safety and Review Consultation - formerly known as the Utilization Review process - were also issued on June 29, 2020. The policies and forms were updated to provide clearer and more informed guidance regarding consultations for investigations where safety threats are discovered and may result in restricting a parent/custodian's rights or resulting in a removal of a child from their home. The new process is intended to help staff better differentiate between assessment of immediate safety issues and risk assessment.
- The second contract with the National Center on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) was executed on July 1, 2020. This includes intake, the safety and risk assessment, and full implementation. Details related to this work will be provided at the virtual kick off meeting with NCCD, scheduled for September 17, 2020.
- The Kinship Support Hotline Received 179 calls in regards to assistance during the month of June.
- Secretary approval was given to use Kentucky Opioid Response Effort funding to fund expansion of the Kentucky Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents (KSTEP) program into a second region. KSTEP is available in the Northeastern service region currently, and expansion efforts are beginning to include four counties in the Salt River Trail Service Region.
- DCBS continues to partner with Chapin Hall to develop continuous quality improvement processes specific to Family First prevention implementation.



Protection and Permanency - Child Welfare

- On July 21, 2020, there were three children decertified in their psychiatric placement settings, one of these decertified cases is placed out of state. There are a total of eight children placed in treatment facilities out of state
- As of July 27, 2020, 442 children in out of home care had been tested for COVID-19. Of these, 59 children had tested positive.
- The Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) stakeholder meeting was held on July 23, 2020, and provided updates to stakeholders on activities within the CFSP, to include objectives to increase timeliness to appropriate permanency, prevention services, and workforce supports. There were approximately 70 participants.
- Three regional meetings have been held (Eastern Mountain, The Lakes, and Two Rivers service regions) to discuss program improvement plan (PIP) monitoring data. Action plans were developed with each region which identified activities to improve scores in regards to the Child and Family Services Review outcomes. Action planning meetings have been scheduled with the remaining regions.

Prevention Services Data

Statewide	Prevention Services				
	Number of Families Referred	Number of Referrals Accepted	Number of Families Served	Number of Families on Waiting List	Diverted to Another Program/Closed without Services
April	255	171	936	77	
May	291	214	944	57	
June	356	224	898	99	5

This data is pulled from the M378, the in-home database, the START database, and agency reporting. The numbers of referred includes cases accepted, case closed without services, diverted to other services, waitlisted, submitted and completed. The numbers of accepted include accepted cases (FPP) and completed cases (START and KSTEP). The numbers of families served includes FPP, KSTEP and START open cases.

- An emergency amendment to 922 KAR 1:490 was filed on May 12, 2020, in order to waive the fingerprint-based background check for foster parents and out of home caregivers temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Division of Protection and Permanency received federal guidance that name-based checks will suffice during the pandemic as long as fingerprint-based checks are conducted once it is safe to do so. This emergency amendment is in the public comment period through July 31, 2020, and will be in effect for 270 days or until the cabinet withdraws it if fingerprint-based background checks become obtainable prior to the emergency expiration.
- An ordinary amendment to 922 KAR 1:330 and an ordinary and emergency amendment to 922 KAR 1:450 were filed on July 10, 2020, to implement legislation that passed during Regular Session 2020. These amendments incorporate female genital mutilation in the child protective services program consistent with Senate Bill 72 and amend the public post-secondary tuition waiver program consistent with Senate Bill 115. These amendments are in the public comment period through September 30, 2020.
- An amendment to 922 KAR 1:500, relating to education and training vouchers, has been drafted to include youth in the legal custody of the cabinet and youth who entered a federally-approved guardianship program from foster care after the age of 16 as eligible for a voucher, consistent with federal regulation. This amendment is anticipated to be filed by August 14, 2020.
- Key Metrics:
 - There were 9,625 children in out-of-home care as of August 2, a trending decrease since the historic high in May.
 - As of 8/2/20, 74 foster children, 28 foster homes, and 66 residential foster care staff have tested positive for COVID-19.

Family Support

- During July, DFS continued to focus on P-EBT issuance. While the number of applications has slowed, we still see 200-300 students approved each day. The P-EBT inbox had reached a high number of issues related to P-EBT issuance, but with the help of staff from DSR, the number is much lower now. DFS has also worked closely with DSR and DPP to ensure the benefits reach eligible foster children. This has been an excellent example of teamwork! Applications are still being accepted through August 31.
- Most Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) operational adjustments had expired July 1. However, on July 21, FNS issued new guidance allowing the re-introduction of the interview requirement waiver and certification period extensions for the months of July and August. DFS has worked with OATS to ensure any July households who faced discontinuance are not discontinued. Expedited approvals who have not had their recertification interview, both from July as well as those approved without interviews earlier in the Spring, will need to provide verification of mandatory information. Instructional material is forthcoming. These actions will ensure thousands of Kentucky households maintain benefits during the recent resurgence in COVID-19.
- DFS continues its partnership with Third Sector in our examination of the impact K-TAP and the Kentucky Works Programs have on very low-income young parents. Surveys and focus groups with field staff have been completed, and surveys with K-TAP recipients are ongoing. As a part of this effort, we are also partnering with the Kentucky Center for Statistics, or KYSTATS, to measure outcome data of KTAP participants; this data along with the results of surveys and focus groups will be used to determine next steps in program improvements.
- SNAP Emergency Allotments will continue again for the month of August. This remains a month-by-month determination, and is primarily based on whether a state-declared emergency is in place.
- Usage of the self-service IVR has reduced the need for Conduent agents to staff the Case Status phone queue. Accordingly, 15 Conduent agents are being assigned to conduct outreach to clients with pending Requests for Information (RFI).
- Emergency and ordinary amendments to 921 KAR 2:015 were filed on December 27, 2019, in order to pass on the federal cost of living adjustment (COLA) to the standard of need for individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income, effective January 2020. The ordinary amendment underwent its final legislative review and went into effect on July 29, 2020.
- Emergency and ordinary amendments to 921 KAR 3:025 were filed on April 15, 2020, in order to eliminate child support arrears as a component of the technical eligibility allowing disqualification from the SNAP. The ordinary amendment is expected to become effective in August.
- Emergency and ordinary amendments to 922 KAR 6:010 were filed on May 21, 2020, in order to immediately utilize federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to increase the eligibility income limit for programs and services provided through Community Services Block Grant funding. The emergency version was effective immediately and the ordinary version is in the public comment period through August 30, 2020.
- Emergency and ordinary amendments to 921 KAR 4:116 were filed on May 28, 2020, in order to immediately utilize federal CARES Act funding to increase the eligibility income limit for services provided with Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Block Grant funding and provide summer cooling assistance. The emergency version was effective immediately and the ordinary version is in the public comment period through August 30, 2020.
- Emergency and ordinary amendments to 921 KAR 3:035 were filed on July 29, 2020 to extend SNAP certification periods, easing the workload crisis emphasized by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring clients' continued access to assistance in purchasing food. The emergency amendment went into effect immediately and the ordinary is in the public comment period through October 31, 2020.



Family Support

- Key Metrics: As of August 3, 2020:
 - SNAP –583,173 (decrease from 7/27/20 of 31,449 but an increase from 3/1/20 of 71,315)
 - Aug. 2020 SNAP Issuance Total – \$99,756,035 ; \$32,961,493 Emergency Allotment Issuance & \$66,794,542 Regular Issuance
 - Medicaid – 1,426,776 (decrease from 7/27/20 of 378 but an increase from 3/1/20 of 71,844)
 - PE Medicaid – 120,571 (increase from 7/27/20 of 5,299)

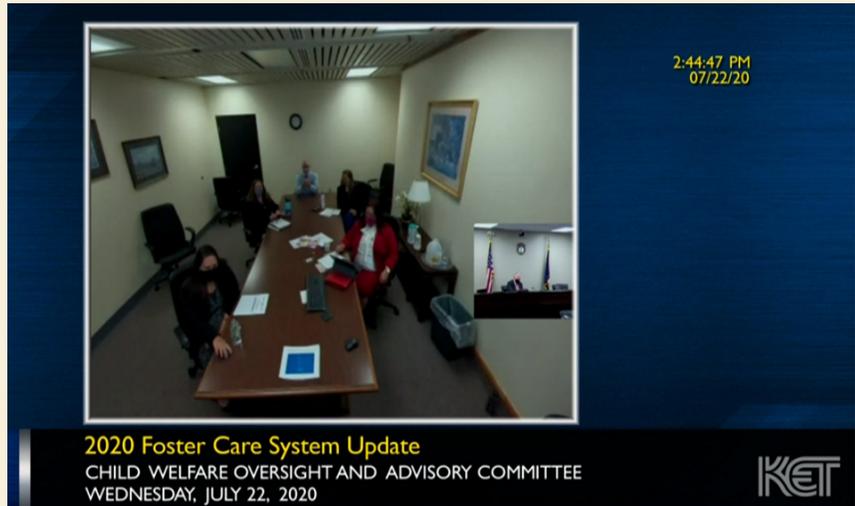
Department Operations

- Service Region Administrators and Assistant Directors in DSR participated in a conversation on July 27, with Rashaad Abdur-Rahman (BHDID) on how to start the conversation on becoming an Anti-Racist organization.
- The Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Redesign underway in the department in collaboration with the Capacity Building Center for States is moving forward and reaching the end of its first phase.
 - The project's two teams, the CQI Self-Assessment Team, and the CQI Academy Training Team, are continuing to finalize their work and preparing to make recommendations to leadership for modifying the state wide CQI plan.
 - The CQI Self-Assessment for agency readiness is completed, and the findings will undergo a final review by the project team and stakeholders involved in the assessment process. The next step will be to make final modifications and present recommendations to the leadership team.
 - The CQI Academy training team completed module six of the training academy which explores the final step of the Cycle of Learning and Improvement "Monitoring and Assessment of Solutions." In this session, the team learned how to select and plan a monitoring and assessment approach to support the department's efforts toward becoming more data informed, outcomes driven, and family centered.
- Central Intake is adding four new positions to the Jefferson Service Region. This was a direct response to the volume of child and adult abuse/neglect reports that come in via the statewide call system between the hours of noon and 7 p.m. These positions will be scheduled during this alternate work schedule time to meet this need.
- The LivingWell Promise deadline was extended to Sept. 14. Employees must either complete the online health assessment or complete a biometric screening in order to earn 2021 premium discounts.
- Offices have also been equipped with disinfectant spray, face shields, and cleaning wipes. The regions have been communicating resource needs and these are tracked weekly to insure supplies are readily available. It is imperative Safety Administrators and Building Managers are kept informed about needs to adequately stock inventory in each individual office.
- Improvements are in test mode on the Critical Incident Reporting System, which tracks and alerts of safety related incidents (workplace violence, unsafe consumer interactions, threats, accidents). The improvements to the current reporting system allows a tiered approach so that prevention, remediation, and aftercare can also be entered into the response by more than one individual. Prior to this change only one respondent could enter incident details. The improvements allow the voices of both direct line staff and Regional Safety Administrators to be entered by the source directly - thus capturing both incident details and response more fully. Additionally, these changes allow reports to be run to capture not only volume and trends in unsafe incidents occurring, but also aftercare and interventions to deter and improve safety for all staff. Within the past 6 months there have been a total of 176 incidents reported in the system.



Department Operations

- The Division of Protection and Permanency and the Commissioner's Office presented an update on the foster care system and out of home care to the Child Welfare Oversight and Advisory Committee on July 22, 2020.
- The Division of Family Support and Community Action Kentucky, Inc., presented on the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and its associated preliminary FFY 2021 state plan to the Interim Joint Committee on Natural Resources & Energy on July 9, 2020.
- DCBS is preparing priority legislative committee presentations for the 2020 interim and "short form" summaries of legislative proposals the department needs to pursue in Regular Session 2021.
- Key Metrics:
 - MTD Processed Personnel Actions:
 - Appoint – 40
 - Resign - 55
 - Retire - 15
- The Safety and Facilities Branch has delivered 4,000 KN95 masks, 22,000 disposable masks, 10,000 cloth masks, 960 gallons of hand sanitizer, 5,000 personal size hand sanitizer, 100 boxes of gloves, and 262 digital contactless thermometers.
- Thirty-two applications for the Public Child Welfare Certification Program were reviewed.



DCBS and CHFS leadership testified virtually before the Child Welfare Oversight and Advisory Committee on July 22. The team included Division of Protection and Permanency Assistant Director Mary Carpenter, DPP Director Christa Bell, Secretary Eric Friedlander, DPP Out of Home Care Branch Manager Kelli Root and Commissioner Marta Miranda-Straub. Their presentation is at <https://bit.ly/2BI9O4k>.

Self-Care Corner

Caring for ourselves during this pandemic must include nurturing - and strengthening - our relationships. These connections mean we are getting and providing warm and comforting support through our friendships to stay resilient. Here are some tips.

Be creative. Keep up with others by using text, phone or video. Video meetings aren't just for work. Go old school and send a letter or a postcard.

Get together in person, safely. Mask up and meet up with one or two friends at a park, or take a walk with your neighbor. You could even plan to have drinks or meal together, spread out on a porch or patio.

Be mindful in all your connections. A mask may hide part of your face, but it doesn't have to hide the fact that you're smiling. Make good eye contact, and always show gratitude. Wave to others on the road or along your exercise path.



Strengthen connections in new ways. Share your garden bounty with others in your community, or offer old toys your kids have outgrown to neighborhood kiddos. Join an advocacy group. Volunteer to help at school or at a nonprofit you believe in. Find volunteer opportunities at the Serve Kentucky Volunteer Kentucky website: <https://serveky.galaxydigital.com/>

Remember, it is OK to be vulnerable. Vulnerability drives connection. Don't think your video background needs to be perfect, or you can't join an online book club because you might not have much to say. And it's OK to reach out and say, "I just wanted to talk to someone."