In difficult times, leaders and staff must lean into resilience

Greetings DCBS,

We come to you this month with a message of hope and healing. Over the past few weeks our nation has continued to suffer from unspeakable acts of violence and acts of hatred toward our fellow citizens. It is safe to say that no corner of our country remains a safe haven from exposure to these public health issues. Continued exposure to violence either as a victim, witness, or even through secondary exposure by continually hearing about such acts has proven to have long-term health and well-being consequences. The time for action is now.

In times like this there is volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. This often leads to changes in how people interact with each other and on a larger scale can entirely change an individuals personality and outlook for the future. A sense of hopelessness for change and for our future can set in and deteriorate our motivation. The time for action is now.

Lately, the world seems to lurch from one crisis to another almost as quickly as the date on the calendar changes. Leaders and managers have to achieve outcomes and lead change in these elements.

Wheels to the World helps youth with new car

Wheels to the World was designed as part of the Division of Protection and Permanency Transitional Services Branch's pandemic relief efforts to remove transportation barriers for foster youth meeting minimum eligibility requirements for the program.

The Northeastern Service Region became the first region to complete a partnership with Dutch's Chevrolet car dealership in Mt. Sterling, Ky. Lonnie Pendleton, dealership affiliate, who has been in car sales for over 40 years, said, "This has been an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be a part of."

Tonya Bailey, Northeastern Regional Independent Living Specialist (ILS), who played a significant role in securing the partnership with Dutch’s Chevrolet, said that she never imagined being a part of something of this magnitude in her role as an ILS and is proud of this accomplishment for the Transitional Services Branch.
The Division of Service Regions’ statewide scorecard for May 2022 is ready, and there are several areas of improvement. There were a total of 335 children who exited OOHC and in May; 108 of those children were reunified with their parents, 92 were adopted, 62 were placed with relatives, 20 were placed with fictive kin, and 21 children chose to extend commitment.

Our R&C Teams approved 108 new resource homes. In May, we closed 788 ongoing request/agency APS/CPS cases.

We have done a great job serving Kentucky Families and children this past month!

Services to Kentucky families and children that we have seen improvements in are:
- Case plans completed timely,
- Supervisory consults completed and documented,
- The number of children reunified, the number of resource homes approved,
- The number of finalized adoptions,
- The number of children placed with fictive kin,
- The number of children that chose to extend commitment, and
- The number of ongoing cases closed.

Areas in which we could improve services to Kentucky families and children are:

Since March 2020, the 9 Regional Safety Administrators have distributed the following PPE items:
- 12,300 Cloth Masks
- 33,000 Disposable Masks
- 3,400 Face Shields
- 339 Thermometers
- 9,016 Individual Hand Sanitizer Bottles
- 1,500 Gallon Size Hand Sanitizer
- 4,000 Disinfectant Spray
- 2,200 Disinfectant Wipe Tubs
Visioning sessions launch community-based prevention efforts across nine regions

The Department recently partnered with Kentucky Youth Advocates to host community visioning sessions in each of the nine DCBS service regions. These half day sessions took place during May and June and are intended to create the foundation for future collaborations for community-based prevention. Visioning sessions are regional convenings that bring together community leaders, service providers, stakeholders, and advocates to discuss the vision for child and family wellbeing in communities as we move toward a prevention focus. Specifically, what would be needed in each community to reduce or eliminate the need for a child welfare system?

Read the story here

Using ‘trauma lens’ can help us understand how children’s experiences shape them

This month’s edition of the clinic corner focuses on childhood trauma and how each of us can help.

These points are adapted from an article by Heather Forkey, “Putting Your Trauma Lens On” published in Pediatric Annals, 2019 Jul 1;48(7):e269-e273. The article is written for pediatricians but gives good tips for all of us working with youth.

Here are some basic points about childhood trauma:

- More than 70% of children in foster care have a history of child abuse or neglect
- Childhood trauma has a lasting effect on the developing brain in areas that are important for learning, emotional behavior, and social behavior
- A trauma-focused lens allows workers and caregivers to understand behaviors and provide important healing

How does childhood trauma show up in the youth we serve? The acronym “FRAYED” may help us understand problem behaviors.

Read the story here
DCBS recognized World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15 with a flag display on the Capitol grounds and by reminding citizens to immediately report suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation. June 15 marked the 17th annual celebration of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, a time to raise awareness of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation throughout the world. At the Capitol event, Leadership and staff joined statewide advocates and leaders to plant purple flags to raise awareness of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation, and they will be on display through June 30.

Kentucky received 21,317 reports alleging abuse, neglect or exploitation of people age 60 and older in state fiscal year 2021.

In May, DCBS’ Adult Protection Services Branch launched its new adult maltreatment website. The interactive redesign includes current data, education and training opportunities, information about local prevention initiatives, newsletters, frequently asked questions and resources. Visit the site at www.kyesteam.ky.gov.

Here are some scenes from the event.
Bell named Champion for Children

Congratulations to our Executive Advisor Christa Bell, who recently received the Children’s Alliance Champion for Children’s Award from group President Michelle Sanborn. Christa, a 25-year veteran of DCBS, was honored for her work in the expansion of prevention services and helping to develop a new salary plan for department staff. Great work, Christa! Thank you to Children’s Alliance for their partnership!

Far right: Christa Bell accepts the Children’s Alliance Champion for Children’s Award from group President Michelle Sanborn.

Right: Christa’s award. Of five honorees, Christa was the only non-legislator to receive the award this year.

Mary Carpenter named Executive Advisor

Mary Carpenter has been appointed to the position of Executive Advisor for the DCBS Commissioner’s Office. She will take the position of Executive Advisor Christa Bell, who will retire from state government on Aug. 1.

In her new role, Mary’s primary responsibilities will be to continue supporting the department’s efforts around primary and secondary prevention in child welfare. As the new Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being is lifted, her responsibilities will shift to other priorities.

Mary said her goals include continuing to strengthen department collaborations in child welfare, including the Thriving Families, Safer Children collaborative.

“Christa Bell has worked with staff, internal partners and external partners to lay the foundation for our agency to move forward in this space of primary and secondary prevention,” she said. “My role will be to continue building on that foundation and to continue engaging with those groups to serve families and children in their communities through parent, youth, and community led approaches.”

Mary has been with DCBS since the Spring of 2004 and has held various positions within the Department.

Mary began her career as a Social Service Worker I in Lincoln County. She worked there for about a year before transferring to Jessamine County where she worked for another five years. In 2009, Mary was promoted to the position of Social Service Specialist. In 2011, she was promoted to the position of Family Service Office Supervisor in Jessamine County where she worked for another five years. In 2009, Mary was promoted to the position of Social Service Specialist. In 2011, she was promoted to the position of Family Service Office Supervisor in Jessamine County where she remained until 2017. In 2017, Mary became the Adoption Branch Manager in the Division of Protection and Permanency. Mary held that position for two years until she was promoted to Assistant Director in 2019. In February 2021, she was appointed as the Director of the Division of Protection and Permanency.

Read the story here
Jefferson Region salutes graduates

The Jefferson Service Region held a graduation celebration for its high school seniors in foster care who are graduating this spring. The event was June 9, and there were 65 graduates, high school juniors, guests and volunteers in attendance.

It was a wonderful night with door prizes, graduation gifts and dancing. There were opportunities for the attendees to have professional graduation photos taken as well as a chance to dress up for pictures in the photo booth.

Congratulations to all the graduates! Here are some scenes from the event.
35 PCWCP students graduate, accept local office positions

Congratulations to this spring’s Public Child Welfare Certification Program (PCWCP) graduates. There were 35 May/June 2022 graduates from 10 of the program’s 11 participating universities.

PCWCP, administered through Eastern Kentucky University, is a university-public agency partnership designed to recruit, prepare and retain public child welfare workers in Kentucky. Students selected to participate in PCWCP receive tuition assistance and a stipend for educational expenses during their last two years of college coursework and commit to two years of employment with DCBS upon graduation.

All 35 spring graduates have already accepted either a classified or interim position with DCBS.

Below is the breakdown of the grads by university and a look at students’ placement by region.

Congratulations to all our graduates and welcome to DCBS!

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<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brescia University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campbellsville University</td>
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<td>Eastern Kentucky University</td>
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<td>Spalding University</td>
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<td>University of Louisville</td>
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<td>Western Kentucky University</td>
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<th>Region</th>
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<td>Northeastern</td>
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<td>Salt River Trail</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Bluegrass</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Two Rivers</td>
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Complete LivingWell Promise by 7/1 to be eligible for discounts

Remember that the LivingWell Promise is due July 1. KEHP members are required to complete this to earn up to $480 in premium discounts in 2023. You earn the LivingWell Promise by being proactive on your health and completing the health assessment or a biometric screening. Visit www.kehplivingwell.com to complete yours.

If you are a new hire or need to create a WebMD ONE account, review the 2022 Program Overview for additional support at https://bit.ly/3QCsL4j. You can also contact Customer Service at 1-866-746-1316, option 1.

Staff engagement survey results available

The results of the 2021 DCBS Employee Engagement Survey are in, and leadership wants to share the report with staff.

Please see the report here.

The survey, a collaboration with our partners at Eastern Kentucky University, was open to all DCBS employees in the fall of 2021.

Leadership staff is already using staff input to improve current workforce needs and potential improvements to agency processes, procedures and services.

A new survey will be launched this fall.

If you have feedback on the survey results, please email the Commissioner's Office at DCBSCommissioner@ky.gov.