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*Agency of Human Services*

July 20, 2021

To: Senator Lyons, Chair  
From: Aryka Radke, Deputy Commissioner  
Re: Follow-up to 6.30.21 Joint Legislative Child Protection Oversight Committee

Below is the information your committee requested from FSD. Please let me know if you have any additional questions. I look forward to testifying again at the July 29th meeting.

**Caseload data for Family Services Workers**

Family Services has seen the numbers of children in State's custody remain below 1300 since October 2019. This decline is consistent with court data showing a decrease in the number of CHINS filings. It is a hopeful trend that we are watching closely. Along with this decrease, the number of families per case worker has also decreased. The current average caseload across the state is about 13 families per case worker, slightly higher than the statutory requirement of 12 families, but the lowest it has been in a long time.

**Contact for Pro-Act, Inc.**

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**Vermont Support & Stabilization (VTSS)**

VTSS is a statewide Specialized and Intensive Family Based Services (SIFBS) program, offering specialized, therapeutic, and behavioral supports designed to provide intensive in-home support and stabilization for children/youth in Vermont and their families and for foster families as well. VTSS promotes placement stability and prevents residential placement of the children/youth. Services are provided based on a thorough assessment of the needs of the family, their capacity to change, and current level of risk to their children. This program is run by Becket Family Services.

Each home will receive the following:

- Up to 10 hours of in-person services a week
- A minimum of 2 hours of training and support/week specific to the foster parent(s)
- 24/7 Crisis On-Call Support
- Foster Care Support Group





Services include the following:

- Safety and Support Planning
- Discharge Planning
- Trauma Informed Care
- Psychoeducation
- Parent Training
- Anger and Behavioral Management
- Role Modeling, Applied Learning in the Community and Preparation for Independent Living
- Case Management and Service Coordination

### **Follow-up to Senator Sears' email**

We reviewed the e-mailed that Senator Sears forwarded to Judy Rex. The statement Tony O'Meara is referring to is a comment made by Commissioner Brown early in the process to House Human Services on February 12, 2021. The DCF team believes we have engaged the community in a meaningful way and have been completely transparent throughout the process. We know there are members of the community who support the project and others that do not. We also understand there are community members who believe as long as there is any level of opposition, we should not proceed. We respectfully disagree with that premise.

We do appreciate Senator Sears' e-mail response to Tony O'Meara where he recounted his experience as Executive Director of Depot Street program in Bennington and the opposition, they faced in the early 70's, but are now about to celebrate the program's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We hope we can do the same with this project.

### **Governor's Veto of S. 107**

Senator Sears had questions regarding what criminal cases the Governor was referring to in his veto message to the Senate of S. 107. In reviewing the Governor's message, we note there are no specific cases mentioned.

### **Annual Child Protection Report**

Here is the link to the most recent Child Protection Report which has additional data on CHINs cases, justice-involved youth cases and reports of child abuse and neglect.

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/Protection/docs/2020-CP-Report.pdf>

