



NH Office of the Child Advocate

COVID-19

As of November 13, 2020, New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families reports a total of 29 COVID-19 positive children in care since the onset of the pandemic in mid-March. This number has increased as DCYF is now reporting infections of all children in care, not only those in residential placement .

Outreach

The OCA staff has begun presenting the changes to the OCA's statutory mandate per RSA 21-V. They have presented to Department of Education leadership, NAMI NH Policy Committee, and NASW Children's Group. If your group would like to meet with the OCA about changes to jurisdiction, feel free to call and schedule. This month the Child Advocate joined the Oversight Committee of the new Family Treatment Court pilot. Three OCA staff have joined committees for the DCYF Child Protection Resource Guide project facilitated by the



National Council on Crime & Delinquency.

The Child Advocate and Associate Child Advocate met with the Child Advocate offices in New England. The Associate Child Advocate and Assistant Child Advocate attended a webinar for Poverty, Race and Consciousness, as well as the meeting of the Trauma-Informed Care Perinatal Substance Exposure Workgroup. OCA staff also attended the Trauma Informed Family Court Practice: Critical Strategies Working with Juveniles and Their Families training.

Inside this issue:

COVID-19	1
Outreach	1-2
Safety Science	1
Oversite	2
Happenings	2
Training Opportunities	2
Message from the Child Advocate	3

OUR WORK

228 cases in process

3700+ cases closed

The OCA 2020 Annual Report is Out! Get a copy here: [Annual Report](#)

Safety Science

OCA staff participated in a refresher training on learning points for its System Learning Reviews. This is part of the OCA's initiative to incorporate safety science into all of the OCA's oversight work.

NH Office of the Child Advocate



Johnson Hall
107 Pleasant St
Concord NH 03301

Phone: 603-271-7773
Toll Free: 833-NHCHILD

childadvocate@childadvocate.nh.gov
childadvocate.nh.us



Oversight

The OCA held its monthly virtual office hours with children at SYSC to enable any child to ask questions and share concerns. The Child Advocate met with Department of Education Commissioner Edelblut and several team members from the DOE. The monthly DCYF/OCA leadership meeting was held in early November. OCA staff are attending Weekly Children's Behavioral Health-ER Boarding issue meetings. The Assistant Child Advocate attended the October Homeless Youth Subcommittee meeting.

Public Health Alert:
Wear a mask and wash
your hands.

You could save a life!

Happenings

Please join New Futures for a virtual screening and discussion of the must-see short film *Step Inside the Circle: Short Film Screening and Discussion*. Step Inside the Circle is a thought-provoking film addressing the damage done by childhood trauma and the ability of the mind, body and spirit to heal. Register at the link above to attend on Thursday, November 19th from 4:30pm to 5:30pm.

The Oversight Commission on Children's Services will meet on Friday, November 20th at 9:00 a.m.. Public may attend via [Zoom](#) or watch on [YouTube](#)

2020 Training Opportunities

11/16/20

A Showing and Discussion of the film "No Small Matter"- by Southern NH Services, Child Care Aware of NH [Register](#)

11/18/20

New Futures Advocacy 101- Learn how to use your voice to make change in NH! [RSVP](#)

11/19/20

Parenting and Teaching During a Pandemic- webinar and panel discussion sponsored by NAMI-NH. [Register](#)

11/20/20

Intersection of Race, Poverty in Juvenile Court: Implicit Bias and the Cradle to Prison Pipeline- presented by the Warren B. Rudman Center and NH Judicial Council [Register](#)

11/21/20

American Foundation of Suicide Prevention- Suicide loss survivors come together to find connection, understanding and hope through their shared experience. [Register](#)

12/04/20

Client Counseling/ Interviewing in Challenging Contexts- presented by the Warren B. Rudman Center and NH Judicial Council [Register](#)

12/05/20

Compassionate Care for Families Affected by Perinatal Substance Exposure Using a Solution Focused, Trauma-Informed Approach - \$15 Child Care Aware of NH [Register](#)

OUR IMPACT

3900+ cases

Since our inception

A Message from the Child Advocate

The Office of the Child Advocate is pleased to release the Office's 2020 Annual Report for the period of October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on all of New Hampshire's children.

The OCA has advocated for and identified rapid development of an expanded community-based system of care, supported in 2019 legislation and budget allocations, as the most crucial response to child and family needs, now exacerbated by the pandemic. Steps are being taken toward implementation. We continue to stress urgency of the situation.

The Office receives complaints about state services for children and reports of incidents that involve children in state care or supervision. The workload increased astronomically in 2020 due to DCYF coming into compliance with the mandate to report incidents to the Office. We received, reviewed and monitored outcomes of 2,183 incident reports, an increase of three times what we saw in the year before. We are keeping in mind that the numbers reflect reporting compliance, not necessarily an increase in incidents. The significance of this reporting is a new capacity to see the breadth of the problem of children enduring injuries, restraints, or going missing. With this data we can start to delve into ways of preventing incidents and better respond to children's needs.



In addition to processing incident reports, our small staff of four full-time and one temporary part time staff processed 311 complaints or inquiries from concerned citizens. We undertook in-depth reviews of 45 individual children's cases, residential programs, and critical incidents. A notable change to the Office in 2020, through House Bill 1162, is expanded jurisdiction to all state or state-funded services for children beyond DCYF. We see this change as a vote of confidence in the work of the Office of the Child Advocate. We recognize that efforts to help children in need will be far more effective when available before a child is abused, neglected or adjudicated and brought into DCYF care.

To review the report, please visit our website childadvocate@nh.gov



Got a problem or complaint with the Department of Health and Human Services?
Your first call should always be to the:

DHHS Ombudsman's Office

Telephone 603-271-6941
Toll Free Number 800-852-3345 ext. 6941
TDD Access Relay 800-735-2964
Fax Number 603-271-4632
Email Ombudsman@dhhs.nh.gov
Street address 105 Pleasant St, Concord NH 03301
Mailing address Office of the Ombudsman, NH DHHS,
129 Pleasant St, Concord NH 03301

**If you think a child is in danger,
call 9-1-1 immediately.**

**To report suspected abuse or neglect
call 1-800-894-5533.**