Improving Outcomes *for* Children

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

City of Philadelphia

Department of Human Services

DHS

Department of Human Services

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From the front cover

Jade, a child awaiting a forever family. Photo © Lulubelle Photography for Heart Gallery Philadelphia.

A Message *from* Mayor Michael A. Nutter

Five years ago, when I asked Anne Marie Ambrose to accept the position of Department of Human Services Commissioner, I explained that my goal was to systematically change the way this agency functions and operates. I asked her to conduct a complete review of our policies and practices and think about ways to deliver services that ensure our children are safe and that our families can stay together.

This is complicated work, but Commissioner Ambrose and her entire staff have continually delivered. They have made it their goal to make DHS a more efficient and effective agency and to help Philadelphia become a safer city. The statistics on pages 13 and 17 speak to the Department's impressive accomplishments over the past five years.

But the numbers only tell a part of the story. Thus it is with utmost pride that I present this report, detailing some of DHS' many other accomplishments and highlighting our newest and most ambitious initiative to date, Improving Outcomes for Children, a community-based approach to service delivery that puts the welfare of Philadelphia's children and families first.

While these achievements are noteworthy, we have no intention of resting on our laurels. We will continue to seek new opportunities to partner with families, communities and child welfare stakeholders in order to improve the lives of our city's most vulnerable children.

A Message *from* Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose

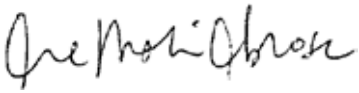
I am pleased to present the Department of Human Services' second annual report, one that highlights a ground-breaking, family-centered, neighborhood-based approach to child welfare service delivery that was implemented this year. This initiative, named *Improving Outcomes for Children (IOC),* represents years of research and planning by hundreds of community stakeholders. The pages that follow outline some of the key components of IOC.

As I mark my fifth year as commissioner, I couldn't be more proud of the transformation of the child welfare system as a whole. We've taken a common sense approach to addressing problems that includes: working hard to keep children in their own homes; thinking expansively about the definition of family; reducing dependence on congregate care; collaborating with cross-system partners, such as the school district and mental health system, to develop creative alternatives to placement; and involving families and the community in developing appropriate and culturally competent solutions.

This year, we've also delivered on promises that have been talked about for decades. We completed and opened the new Juvenile Justice Services Center (formerly the YSC), while also breaking ground on a new co-location designed to reduce the trauma of child sex abuse investigations and to provide more efficient, effective and compassionate services to victims.

With the invaluable support of Casey Family Programs and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, we've sought to learn from our colleagues throughout the country and infused best practices and nationally-recognized interventions into the work we do.

None of these achievements would be possible without the hard work and dedication of DHS' extraordinary staff and leadership. They have endured numerous transitions and obstacles, and yet every day they take on more challenges and continue to excel. I am so grateful for their commitment.



Improving Outcomes for Children: A Groundbreaking Approach to Service Delivery

1. Thoughtful, Collaborative Design
2. One Family. One Plan.
3. Family-Driven Approach
4. Parent Support
5. Enhanced Accountability

© Robin Burkert

Improving Outcomes for Children

A Community Partnership Child Welfare Model

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In 2012, DHS implemented Improving Outcomes for Children, a groundbreaking new service-delivery model that represents a major step forward in its effort to ensure the safety, permanency and well being of children. Based on the premise that positive outcomes are achieved through child welfare services that are family-centered, culturally competent, integrated, timely, and accountable for results, IOC is a community-based model of service delivery, with distinct and well-defined roles for both DHS and provider agencies.

This new approach to service delivery focuses on the neighborhoods where our children and families live. Case management services for children involved in the child welfare system are delivered by community-based providers called Community Umbrella Agencies (CUAs) while DHS is responsible for monitoring, oversight and quality assurance. The model also has a strong focus on Family Team Decision Making, which brings together the family, child, and service and system partners to address key decisions related to safety, permanency and well being.

The IOC service delivery model is designed to increase system performance to achieve positive results for children, youth and families including the following primary outcomes:

- More children and youth maintained safely in their own homes and communities.
- More children and youth achieving timely permanency.
- A reduction in the use of congregate care.
- Improved child, youth, and family functioning.

To learn more about IOC, go to dhs.phila.gov.

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1 Thoughtful, Collaborative Design

IOC is the result of more than two years of intentional and collaborative planning. More than 150 people from key stakeholder groups throughout the city were actively engaged in developing the initiative including DHS staff, representatives from the provider community, Family Court leadership, city officials, academics, advocates, union leaders, system partners (including the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbilities and the Philadelphia School District as well as the District Attorney's office), older youth, residents and community agencies. DHS also conducted extensive literature reviews and drew upon the experience and best practices of child welfare agencies throughout the country, including the state of Florida and New York City, which have adopted similar models.

PROFILES OF EXCELLENCE

Dwight Leevy
is a high-octane youth advocate who brings his considerable knowledge and 35 years' experience to his work as a Community Engagement Specialist. In 2012, Dwight's unit initiated Girls Track, a mentoring program in early middle school through high school. "Every day we ask ourselves, are we making a difference in kids' lives? That's what drives us."

2 One Family. One Plan.

IOC is designed to make life simpler for families. Previously, families served by DHS often had numerous caseworkers involved with a variety of DHS services, which could be confusing and burdensome. Moreover, DHS offices and other supports, as well as many foster care placements, were not in the communities where families lived. As a result, travel to visit children, going to case conferences and accessing services could be difficult.

With IOC, families deal with one provider—a Community Umbrella Agency (CUA)—that has a strong connection to their neighborhood. This CUA is responsible for delivery of all services and for ensuring that each family has a single caseworker, a single point of contact with the DHS system. The CUA worker is supported by a team of professionals so that families and children get the services they need from providers within their own communities. The CUA will also seek foster care placements in neighborhoods closer to home or within the child's natural network, such as their school or church, which will help siblings stay better connected and result in more extended family engagement.

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3 Family-Driven Approach

IOC is grounded in a Family Team Decision Making model in which each family plays an active role in its case. Such teaming leads to ongoing collaborative problem solving, more effective service provision and ultimately better results for children and their families. Family Team Conferences occur at key decision points throughout the life of a case. Extended families are often involved, as are community supports, Community Umbrella Agency (CUA) workers, and DHS staff and resource parents who will be expected to support the child's reunification.

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PROFILES OF EXCELLENCE

Bonita Kershaw-Dawkins is a 30-year DHS veteran; she took over as supervisor of the Parenting Action Network Unit in 2012. Bonita and her 10-person team deliver much needed educational services and training for parents, including those whose children are in placement. Bonita exemplifies the character and professionalism that allow DHS to best serve and empower our clients.

4 Parent Support

A key aspect of IOC is supporting and strengthening families. To that end, DHS is partnering with child welfare leaders in Illinois to implement an innovative approach to parent and community education and support called the Strengthening Families Framework. One component of this framework are Parent Cafes, in which parents gather in welcoming settings to participate in guided conversations around five protective factors:

- Parent Resilience:
  Be strong and flexible.
- Social Connections:
  Parents need friends.
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: Being a great parent is part natural and part learned.
- Concrete Support in Times of Need:
  We all need help sometimes.
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children: Parents need to help their children communicate.

Through these conversations, parents collectively make discoveries that lead to personal growth and better parenting.

PROFILES OF EXCELLENCE

Pat McGeehan
has been with DHS for fifteen years. She says that with the department turning over case management to outside organizations under IOC, it's more important than ever to "hold providers accountable for the children and families we serve." As administrative assistant to the Deputy Commissioner in "Performance Management and Accountability," Pat says she is constantly impressed at the focus, care and dedication among DHS professionals.

5 Enhanced Accountability

With the implementation of IOC, DHS will continue the process of enhancing its performance management structure to support improvements in practice. The agency has identified defined and measurable outcomes and performance measures and developed multiple strategies for monitoring progress toward those outcomes. Within IOC, DHS Practice Monitors examine the quality and consistency of safety assessments, safety plans, single case plans and family teamings across the system. DHS Quality Visitation Reviewers visit homes to ensure that documentation matches the family's experience of services. DHS Quality Service Reviews support system performance and organizational learning. The findings of each of these processes are reported out on a consistent basis and discussed during CUA performance reviews and during ongoing ChildStat meetings, in which professionals from a range of disciplines review and discuss outcomes data and performance measures on randomly selected cases.

Our IOC Partners

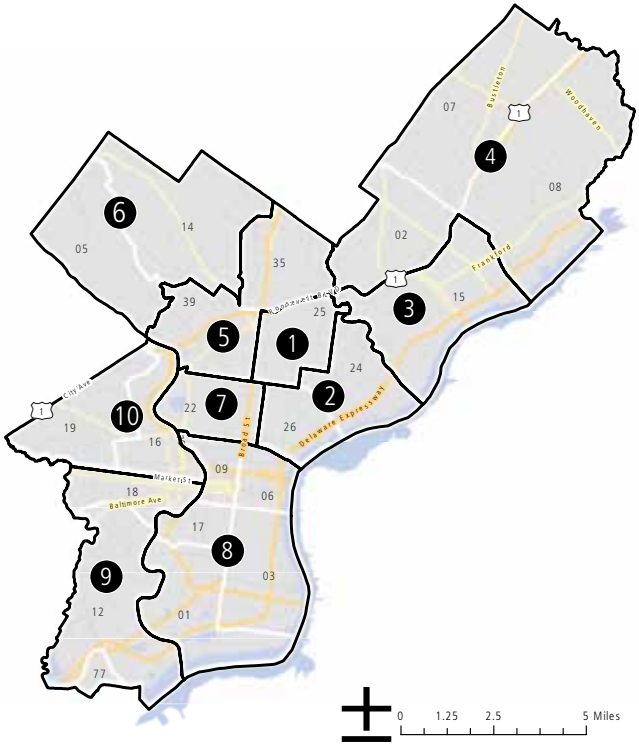
The first two areas where IOC will be implemented are located in North Philadelphia. The Community Umbrella Agencies (CUAs) that will provide service delivery for those areas have already been selected through a rigorous proposal process. They include **Northeast Treatment Centers (NET)** and **Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha (APM)**, both of which have a documented record of more than 40 years of commitment and involvement in the communities they serve.

NET is well known as a national leader in the field of addiction recovery, but it started as a youth services organization. NET, which is dedicated to supporting youth and families in their own communities, serves more than 400 families annually. It also provides effective school-based programs, parenting classes, and adult drug and alcohol treatment programs.

APM helps reunify families, providing child protective services, behavioral health and foster care services. It is also known for building affordable housing, further raising the quality of life for families in its community. APM's President and CEO Nilda Ruiz says she "looks forward to helping and stabilizing more families and getting more children into healthy, permanent homes, as soon as possible."

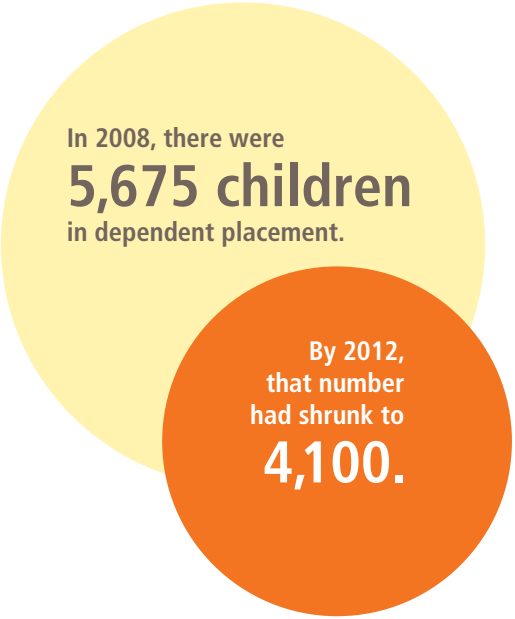
As APM and NET prepare for their first cases, DHS has begun the selection process for the next three CUA areas. Those CUAs are expected to be announced later in 2013, with the remaining five to follow soon thereafter.

All ten CUA regions are shown on this city map:



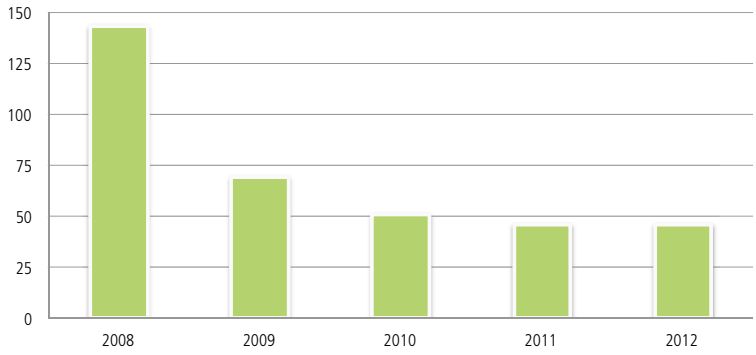
Child Welfare By the Numbers

The number of children in dependent placements has declined every year since 2008.



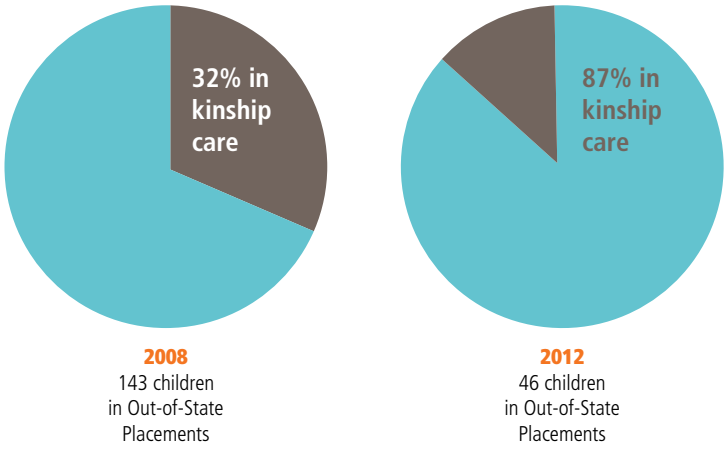
That's a 28% decrease.[1]

Number of Youth in Out-of-State Dependent Placement as of December 31st



From 2008 to 2012, that's a 68% decrease.[2]

Of those children placed out of state, the number placed with relatives increased dramatically from 2008 to 2012.[3]



[1,2,3] Data source: Cognos-8 query of DHS Data Warehouse, run January 17, 2013.

Juvenile Justice

2012 Update

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At the ribbon cutting of the Juvenile Justice Service Center.

"The juvenile justice system is the last chance to get these young people to make different decisions. The new YSC reflects our high expectation that children **can** change."

Anne Marie Ambrose
DHS Commissioner

Offering space for change

After years of planning, DHS has opened the doors of the new Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Service Center (JJSC). The JJSC (formerly known as the Youth Study Center) a secure detention facility for youth ages 13-20, aims to steer children accused or found guilty of crimes away from illegal conduct. Youth generally stay in the facility for an average of eight days while awaiting proceedings or long-term placement.

Located at the corner of 48th and Haverford Avenue in West Philadelphia, the state-of-the-art building has a sleek design with numerous windows that let in lots of natural light. Additionally, with over 160,000 square feet and beds for at least 150 residents, the spacious new facility will eliminate issues with overcrowding.

The JJSC design reflects the services youth receive and the flow of their daily activities. It features 10 classrooms, a gymnasium, a health clinic, outdoor recreation spaces and a garden for residents. Visitation space includes a play area where volunteers can baby-sit young children and rooms where youth can meet with their families, lawyers, social-service providers and probation officers. Family Court courtrooms, Judges' chambers and conference rooms are also on site.

The JJSC served as a model site for several city-wide initiatives. It is the largest City project built to meet LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards, and it was a pilot site for a city-wide effort to employ more women and minority contractors in public projects. The building was also part of the City's 'Percent for Art' program, and features specially commissioned artwork by two Philadelphia-based painters.

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The brand new Juvenile Justice Services Center.

Reducing youth violence

In December 2012, DHS Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose, Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey and Administrative Judge Kevin Dougherty were named co-chairs of Philadelphia's Violence Prevention Collaborative. The collaborative will work to develop a strategic and comprehensive approach to reducing youth violence in the 22nd police district. It will also provide an opportunity for DHS to partner with all City agencies as well as philanthropic and academic partners to highlight strategies aimed at improving quality-of-life issues and promoting safety in our most challenging communities. The work of the Violence Prevention Collaborative will complement the efforts of IOC to strengthen children and families at the neighborhood level.

PROFILES OF EXCELLENCE

Nelson Leon
recently retired after a 33-year career as a Youth Detention Counselor at DHS. His compassion for teenagers and his remarkable efforts at helping them change their behaviors defined his service. Nelson says of his work, "our job is not to judge these kids, but to give them care, love and guidance."

Stimulating juvenile justice reforms

Research has shown that juvenile detention has critical, long-lasting consequences for court-involved youth. With support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), Philadelphia's Juvenile Justice System (JJS) is implementing reforms aimed at improving outcomes for the youth it serves.

By focusing on juvenile detention as a direct entry point for reform, JDAI encourages policies, practices and programs for youth that maximize their chances for personal transformation, protect their legal rights, reduce their likelihood of unnecessary or inappropriate incarceration, and minimize the risks they pose to their communities.

Too often youth are unnecessarily or inappropriately detained at great expense, with long-lasting negative consequences for both public safety and youth development. Detention disrupts already tenuous connections in school, services and families. Over the long haul, the detention experience also negatively impacts educational and employment levels. JDAI promotes changes to policies, practices and programs to address these issues.

Through JDAI the City has taken numerous steps to better understand juvenile justice issues. An assessement of the system was conducted, which included a site visit to the temporary YSC as well as interviews with at least 30 stakeholders including leadership from DHS, the District Attorney's Office, Probation, and the Office of Community Behavioral Health. Additionally, the City is benefiting from the experience of other jurisdictions. Key stakeholders from Philadelphia have visited other JDAI locations and attended an inter-site conference to network and learn about best practices.

JDAI Goals

- Reduce reliance on secure confinement;
- improve public safety;
- reduce racial disparities and bias;
- save taxpayers' dollars; and
- stimulate overall juvenile justice reforms.

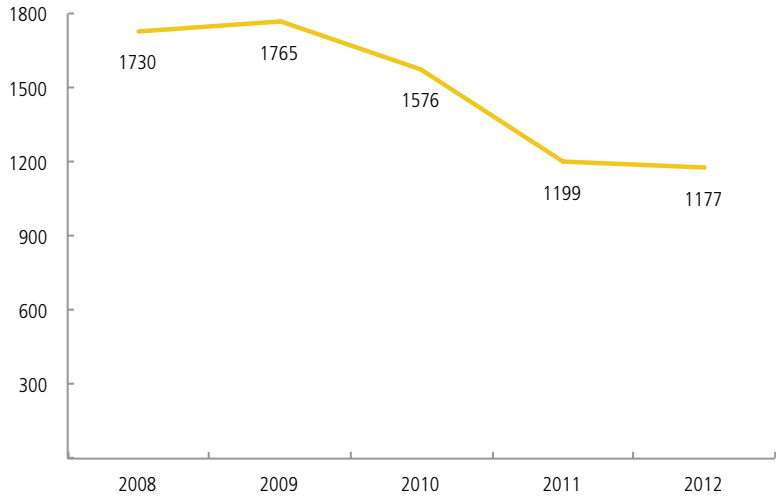
Juvenile Justice By the Numbers

In **2008**, the average daily population of the JJSC (formerly the Youth Study Center) was **134**.

By **2012**, that number had dropped to **111**.

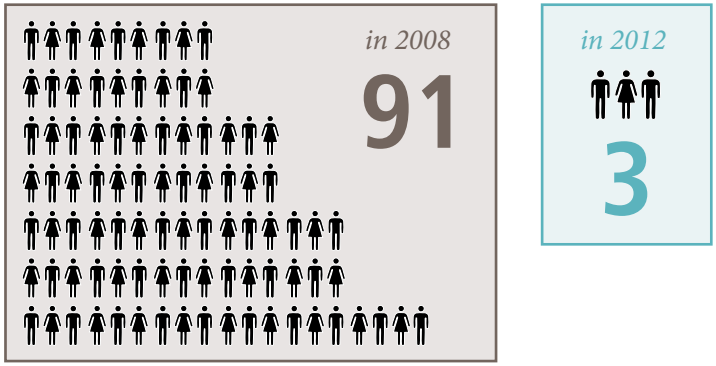
That's a 17.5% decrease.[1]

Number of Youth in Delinquent Placement as of December 31st



That's a 32% decrease.[2]

Number of Youth in Out-of-State Delinquent Placement as of December 31st



That's a 97% decrease.[3]

[1]Data source: JJS data book on DHS Central, retrieved January 24, 2013.

[2]Does not include youth in pre-trial or youth development centers. Data source: Cognos-8 query of DHS Data Warehouse, run January 17, 2013.

[3]Data source: Cognos-8 query of DHS Data Warehouse, run January 17, 2013.

Improved Outcomes

2012 Update

PROFILES OF EXCELLENCE

Luisa Garcia
is a Social Work Services Manager in the sexual abuse unit. She often devotes extra hours to ensure that the difficult cases she is assigned get every needed minute of her attention. This year she was honored by the Philadelphia Children's Alliance as "the embodiment of a true child welfare professional."

Supporting very young children

Young children served by the child welfare system will benefit from two new iniatives funded by the Administration of Children, Youth and Families. Teamwork for Enhancing Early Childhood (TEECH), will bring together key child welfare and early childhood education providers, stakeholders, advocates and parents to develop culturally competent strategies aimed at increasing enrollment of DHS-involved children ages 0-5 in high quality, trauma-informed early care and education.

The second initiative aims to promote well-being for children ages 0-5 who are in out-of-home placement and affected by parental substance abuse. This project will test the efficacy of an evidence- and relationship-based treatment model at the Achieving Reunification Center, which works to reunite parents with their children in placement. The initiative will also improve the overall system of services for young children affected by parental substance abuse by strengthening existing partnerships, interagency collaboratives and cross-system training.

Reducing trauma for victims of sexual abuse

In August, DHS Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose joined Mayor Nutter and other City officials to ceremonially break ground on a new site that will colocate several key agencies that support and protect victims of sexual abuse. The new facility will bring together members of the Philadelphia Police Department Special Victims Unit (SVU), DHS Sexual Abuse Investigations Unit, the Philadelphia Children's Alliance and staff from the District Attorney's Office. The thoughtful design of the

new center will help lessen the trauma of the investigative process by offering a comfortable, child-friendly place for children to receive services. It will also enable partner agencies to effectively coordinate their efforts in a single location so children will no longer have to repeatedly relive the events of their assault.

Demonstrating excellence in leadership

DHS Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose received one of the Casey Family Programs' highest honors when she was presented with the Excellence in Leadership Award. The Commissioner was selected for her leadership in improved outcomes for children and families in Philadelphia, her successful community and government collaborations, and her national vision and leadership with regards to improving services to vulnerable children and families.

Combating childhood obesity

© LISA DUGAN

In Philadelphia and across the nation, childhood obesity is a growing problem. According to the Philadelphia Department of Health, approximately 63% of all Philadelphians and 40% of Philadelphia children are either overweight or obese. To help combat this trend, DHS held an informative town hall providing parents and young people information and resources to help them adopt healthier lifestyles. At the interactive town hall, chefs presented healthy cooking demonstrations, representatives from the recreation department taught participants fun, easy ways to increase their physical activities, and parents received information about ways they can help children achieve a healthy weight and how to access affordable healthy food.

PROFILES OF EXCELLENCE

Sandra Williams
works in the Finance Department to make sure children in DHS care are supported by every federal dollar for which they are eligible. She and the nearly 40 people she supervises are driven by a sincere desire to protect children. Sandra, now in her 31st year with DHS, arrives at her desk at 6:30 each morning.
That's motivated!

Providing pathways to success

Out-of-school time (OST) programs are considered an essential component in Philadelphia's strategy to improve the life chances and outcomes for youth. These programs help young people develop myriad skills and are closely correlated with school success. This past year, DHS and its partners in Parks and Recreation, the Free Library and the School District received national recognition for their work in out-of-school-time programming through a three-year Wallace Foundation grant to expand system building efforts for after-school programs. DHS currently supports 70 provider agencies operating 181 after school and summer programs providing 10,000 slots for nearly 20,000 youth in grades K-12 throughout Philadelphia. These programs offer year-round, age appropriate content and activities, ranging from homework assistance to academics to enrichment.

Maximizing federal funding

DHS played a critical role in a statewide effort to obtain a federal IV-E waiver. The waiver provides approval for the State to redirect funds traditionally allocated for out-of-home placement services to provide prevention and early intervention services and to develop and expand evidence-based practices. The funds will be used to test innovative approaches to child welfare service delivery and financing through a five-year demonstration project. The goal of this initiative is to improve child/family functioning and placement decisions. Specifically, the State aims to achieve a 30% reduction in the number of children placed in congregate care, the number who re-enter foster care after family reunification and the number of days children spend in foster care.

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Welcoming children in a cheerful space

DHS' child care area provides a supervised, safe environment for youth ages 17 and under who are entering the child welfare system in emergency situations. The area is considerably more cheerful now that two murals created by Philadelphia artist Cathleen Hughes (through the Mural Arts Program) brighten the rooms.

The area also received a generous donation of bassinets, toys and other comforting items from a fifth grade class at Thomas Holme Elementary School. The donation was a way for those students to honor DHS workers who have given generously of their time and money for 11 years by facilitating a pen pal and holiday gift giving program. To raise money for the gifts, the students planned an ambitious roster of fundraising activities including creating and selling good luck cards throughout the school for PSSA testing; a walkathon, and a pretzel sale, which they marketed by making posters for every classroom in the school. They also participated in a variety of educational activities to learn more about abuse, neglect and the child welfare system.

Pictured at left: The fifth graders from Thomas Holme Elementary School pose with their generous gifts.

Ways to Contact Us

General Information and The Commissioner's Action Response Office
215-683-4DHS

Child Abuse Hotline
215-683-6100

Parent Action Network
215-PARENTS

Website
dhs.phila.gov

Email
dhscommunications@phila.gov

Facebook
facebook.com/PhiladelphiaDepartmentofHumanServices

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected:

Suspected abuse or neglect of children may be reported 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling the DHS Child Abuse Hotline (*see number at left*). Reports can be made anonymously; however, when the reporter does give a name, it is not revealed to anyone. This practice is strictly enforced.

If you would like to become a foster parent:

First, you must have a strong commitment to children, abundant patience and understanding and, above all else, a big heart with love to spare.

You must also be over 21 years old, single, married or living in a relationship, and not convicted of violent acts or crimes against children. You must be able to provide appropriate sleeping space for foster children apart from the foster parent(s); medical clearance; and references. You must be willing to participate in a home study process and in training; must have a demonstrated ability in caring for children and their families, and must have sufficient income.

For more information, please read the foster parent handbook on our website, call 215-683-4DHS, or submit your name and address to dhscommunications@phila.gov and an informational packet will be mailed to your address.

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City of Philadelphia
Department of Human Services
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Website: dhs.phila.gov
Facebook: PhiladelphiaDepartmentofHumanServices
Email: dhscommunications@phila.gov