



Virginia Department of Social Services

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Commissioner's Memo #012



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Date: July 18, 2008

To: Directors of Local Departments of Social Services

From: Anthony Conyers Jr.

Directors,

Following are the topics contained in this Memorandum:

- [Child Services Review Team monitoring](#)
- [Office of Early Childhood Development](#)
- [End of Interdepartmental Regulation Program for Children's Residential Facilities](#)
- [PC Refresh](#)
- [Thank you from First Lady Anne Holton](#)

Child Services Review Team monitoring

Virginia will once again partner with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families to conduct a comprehensive Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and develop plans for improvement. Consistent with Virginia's Child Welfare Services Transformation through the Council on Reform (CORE), the CFSR is designed to help states improve child welfare services as well as show measurable outcomes for families and children.

The review will examine seven outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being. These outcomes are:

- Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families.
- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Virginia's second round review is scheduled for the week of July 13, **2009**. It will occur in three Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS), and these will be selected in concert with federal representatives. While this on-site review will not take place until next year, the Family Services Monitoring Unit is currently in the process of preparing for the event. As a part of that process, all LDSS are being reviewed as potential on-site review locations. We are currently looking at the number of children in foster care, data results, best practice, and other pertinent topics that will help VDSS decide which localities could be potential review sites. Approximately 10-12 agencies will be selected for further, more in-depth case reviews conducted by the Family Services monitoring unit.

The Department will be regularly posting information on SPARK (click Divisions and Initiatives, then click Family Services (DFS), then click Child and Family Services (CFS) Assessment/Review/Improvement). The direct link is: <http://spark.dss.virginia.gov/divisions/dfs/cfs/index.html>

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Office of Early Childhood Development

Social Services and Education are natural and essential partners in preparing children to become lifelong learners and productive, self-sufficient adults. Virginia has launched the Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD), which is now coordinating state programs aimed at improving the lives and education of the Commonwealth's youngest citizens and residents.

Kathy Glazer will serve as the director, working jointly with the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The office also will work through a liaison with the Virginia Department of Health to ensure the integration of health-related programs. VDSS' Division of Childcare and Development will now fall under OECD.

OECD is supported by VDOE and VDSS staff and is responsible for coordinating services for children from birth to age five, including the Virginia Preschool Initiative, Head Start, childcare subsidies, provider services and other state-level efforts to advance early childhood development and learning. The opening of this new office institutionalizes a partnership between two agencies that share a commitment to the development and education of young children. Please email kathy.glazer@dss.virginia.gov for more information.

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End of Interdepartmental Regulation Program for Childrens Residential Facilities

As [Broadcast 5024](#) states, the Interdepartmental Regulation Program for Children's Residential Facilities ended on July 1, 2008. The Office of Interdepartmental Regulation will become the Office of Background Investigations. This new office will be managed by Charlene Vincent and will continue to process criminal background investigations for all children's residential facilities (except those certified by the Department of Juvenile Justice) and child placing agencies.

The Child Protective Services Central Registry Search Unit will be moved from the Division of Family Services to the new Office of Background Investigations. All requests for criminal background investigations formerly addressed to the Office of Interdepartmental Regulation should now be addressed to the Office of Background Investigations.

This action is the result of Senate Bill 472 that was approved by the 2008 General Assembly and was signed into law by Governor Kaine on April 23, 2008. The new legislation requires the Boards of the Departments of Juvenile Justice; Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; and Social Services to adopt regulations establishing each department as the single licensing agency with the exception of educational programs licensed by the Department of Education. The Department of Education (DOE) will no longer have the authority to license a children's residential facility and will only license educational programs offered in a licensed/certified children's residential facility.

The *Standards for Interdepartmental Regulation of Children's Residential Facilities* (22 VAC 42-11-10 et. seq.) shall remain in full force and effect until such time as each Board promulgates regulations as required by the new legislation. Each department must promulgate regulations by October 31, 2009. Once regulations have been promulgated by a department the *Standards for Interdepartmental Regulation of Children's Residential Facilities* will cease to apply.

Those facilities that currently have the Department of Education (DOE) as their lead regulatory agency will be licensed by one of the other agencies as of July 1, 2008. The licensing agency will be determined based on the facility's population and services to be offered. Those facilities that have DOE as their secondary regulatory agency will be receiving a separate license for their school program from DOE. The facility's current license remains in effect until its expiration date or until DOE issues a new license. DOE plans to issue new licenses to applicable school programs within one year.

You will need to contact the facility's licensing/certification agency with any questions rather than the Office of Interdepartmental Regulation. Please be aware that each regulatory agency will be changing forms and procedures. To determine a regulatory agency for a children's residential facility, please refer to [Broadcast 5024](#). For more information, please e-mail charlene.vincent@dss.virginia.gov

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PC Refresh

I would like to thank you for your patience and cooperation throughout the PC Refresh that is taking place over the next 12 to 18 months.

During the process of inventorying at your agency, you may find that more than one computer has been assigned to a single user. Because of the cost that VDSS is being charged by VITA/NG for computers, I need your help in making sure this practice does not continue into the future. There will only be one computer assigned to any one user. That computer may be either a laptop or a desktop computer.

Because VDSS is charged a higher fee for laptop computers, please carefully consider which of your employees require laptops. Each local agency will be allowed up to 20% of their current inventory to be laptop computers. Any requests exceeding 20% must be accompanied by a description of how the increase in the number of laptops will either reduce the overall cost of providing services or increase productivity. The 20% standard for LDSS is no different than the internal standard that has been implemented within VDSS and is an effort to control our VITA costs.

Thank you for your continued cooperation. If you have questions, please e-mail robert.hobbelman@dss.virginia.gov.

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Thank you from First Lady Anne Holton

I would like to share with you a note that I received from First Lady Anne Holton, and echo the appreciation expressed therein. Without your leadership and the dedication of your staff, Virginia could not lead the nation in TANF job entry and retention. As a team, we make the goal of self-sufficiency an achievable one for our clients. Please include my sincere thanks when you share this message with your staff.

From: Holton, Anne
To: Conyers, Anthony (VDSS)
CC: Tavenner, Marilyn (GOV)
Sent: Fri Jul 11 11:53:22 2008
Subject: kudos

Tony,

A belated congratulations on the national recognition Virginia recently received on being #1 in the nation for getting TANF recipients to work and for their high rate of job retention. This really is one of those challenges where many people thought we couldn't successfully make a change, but the Virginia success story proves otherwise. And our success clearly was achieved through great work by both VDSS and the local social service agencies.

The value of course isn't just in wise use of state resources but in the enhancement of the recipients' lives through achieving self-sufficiency, and in the improvements to our workforce particularly now in the healthcare field. Please let me join the chorus in congratulating you and your staff and the local agencies for a job well done.

The First Lady has been a champion of causes that are dear to us as human services professionals. I thank her, and you, for the continued interest and support of these important issues.

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Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Social Services
Office of the Commissioner
7 N. 8th St.
Richmond, VA 23219

Commissioner's Memo No. 013

DATE: October 20, 2008

TO: Directors of Local Departments of Social Services

FROM: Anthony Conyers Jr.

Directors,

Following are the topics contained in this Memorandum:

- Postponement of salary increase
- I.T. surplus close-out
- Integrated child care data system

Postponement of Salary Increase

As part of the Governor's FY 2009 budget reduction plan, the two percent salary increase planned for state and state-supported local staff to be effective on December 1, 2008 has been postponed. Funds for this increase were included in your locality's FY 2009 final allocations for Eligibility Staff and Operations (budget line 853) and Services Staff and Operations (budget line 854). Unfortunately, we must now reduce your allocations to these budget lines to reflect this change.

The Department will be issuing updated budget letters to include revised budget allocations to each Local Department this week. If salary increases were granted to employees in your locality in advance, those costs will need to be covered by local funds and/or pass through funds. Specific questions related to budget issues should be addressed to Mike Gump, Budget Director at michael.gump@dss.virginia.gov or 804-726-7223. Specific questions related to employee compensation issues should be addressed to Jett Shupe, Human Resources Analyst at jett.shupe@dss.virginia.gov or 804-726-7259.

IT Surplus Closeout

State agencies have been asked to reduce all unnecessary spending as a result of the current economic climate. As indicated in Broadcast 5228, one project the Department needs to complete is a closeout of all state IT equipment by local offices completing the inventory surplus process. The state is currently paying a monthly fee to the VITA/NG partnership for every asset listed in the inventory.

The completion of the surplus process will eliminate inactive machines from the inventory and reduce agency billing. Every office is asked to contact Susan Rackley, VDSS Division of Information Systems at susan.rackley@dss.virginia.gov or 804-726-7700 to make arrangements to have surplus inventory removed.

The agency has set the deadline of Dec. 1, 2008, to receive your request for surplus removal. **After that date, all surplus assets that are not active on the network will be subject to a charge back to your local agency equal to the fees the Department currently pays to VITA (\$66.94 per desktop monthly/\$85.33 per laptop monthly).** The charge back will commence with receipt of the January 2009 billing that is received 2/15/09 and continue until surplus inventory is eliminated.

If you have any questions, please contact Robert Hobbelman, CIO, VDSS Division of Information Systems at robert.hobbelman@dss.virginia.gov or Susan Rackley.

Integrated child care data system

The Office of Early Childhood Development, which spans the Child Care and Development and Head Start units at DSS and the preschool unit at the Department of Education, has been awarded a three-year, \$650,000 grant from the Administration for Children and Families. Working with a research team at Virginia Tech, OECD proposes to develop an integrated (interagency) data system that will enable policymakers to assess the impact of our quality child care initiatives used by low-income, working families and at-risk children.

Questions the project will address are:

- 1) What kinds of preschools/child care are children who receive CCDF subsidies and TANF attending?
- 2) What is the quality of that preschool/care?
- 3) Are there differences in type and quality of care depending on ethnicity, locality, home language or other demographic factors?
- 4) How are these children faring in kindergarten, and how is that related to the programs they attended prior to kindergarten?

Understanding the provision of subsidized child care, its interaction with Head Start and the state-funded preschool program, and its impact on quality, children's school readiness, and family support will require the participation and data of many partners. Local departments will have the opportunity to participate by providing insight into our research processes and by sharing relevant data to enrich the depth of data and information gleaned. More information will be coming soon.

In the meantime, please contact Kathy Glazer, director of the OECD, at kathy.glazer@dss.virginia.gov or 804-726-7124.

Thanks for your prompt response and attention to these matters.

AC/VDSS