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**Media Contact:**

Sean McFarland, MA

Public Affairs Officer

401-408-3087

[sean.mcfarland@ohhs.ri.gov](mailto:sean.mcfarland@ohhs.ri.gov)

**DCYF launches new Screening and Response Unit to better support Rhode Island families**

*Families in need will be provided with supports in their own communities*

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) today announced the launch of a new Screening and Response Unit (SRU) at the Department, to help connect families and their children to support services. DCYF recognizes that many families are struggling right now and could benefit from accessing services and supports that were traditionally only available to families with official DCYF or Family Court involvement. The SRU will provide assistance by identifying each family’s needs and providing necessary supports to help families thrive.

The new unit, which is located within DCYF’s Family Services Unit (FSU), will help families navigate services in their own communities. It will also serve as an asset for families who are feeling overwhelmed or who need assistance with accessing home and community-based services for a variety of needs.

“The Screening and Response Unit will mobilize the availability of a network of home and community-based services to help children, youth and families,” said Kevin Aucoin, Acting Director, “The Department’s goal is to keep families together, and prevent child abuse and maltreatment, by empowering and partnering with families to ensure they have the resources they need to be successful.”

SRU staff are available to offer:

- Assessments for families using established screening and assessment tools;
- Short-term, home- and community-based services for families and children who need support;
- Assistance for families when their older youth are exhibiting wayward or disobedient behavior; and
- Local resources to better support families whose children have behavioral health needs.

“I am very pleased with this important and timely initiative by the Department of Children, Youth and Families,” said Jennifer Griffith, The Child Advocate. “I am confident that this will assist and reach families who otherwise would not have the immediate access to services they need.”

Rhode Island families are encouraged to call the SRU by dialing 1-888-RI-FAMILY (74-32659).

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