

Department of Children & Families Raises Questions

DCF TIMELINE

Senate Republicans have called repeatedly for DCF reforms and the removal of the current DCF Commissioner. The following timeline details some major issues that have been raised about the agency over the past few years, as well as calls for action.

Disturbing Individual Case	<p>June 2018 - Suicide of a pregnant 16-year-old girl at the Albert J. Solnit Children’s Center – South Campus in Middletown. This follows repeated findings of Solnit’s conditions placing children in ‘immediate jeopardy,’ which has led to the Child Advocate calling for a public hearing. In addition failures were found in the system in which protection personnel failed to immediately start resuscitation efforts after the teen was found hanging in her room at the Solnit psychiatric center for children in Middletown on June 28, and failed to immediately call for emergency medical technicians to respond. In addition, Inspectors found that a DCF staff member did not conduct the required face-to-face check of the teen during the 8:30 p.m. observation period. http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-news-solnit-patients-jeopardy-suicide-0726-story.html http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-dcf-pregnant-teen-suicide-mistakes-20180809-story.html</p>
Rejecting Oversight	<p>June 2018- Governor Dannel P. Malloy vetos Senate Bill 188 (Public Act 18-140) An Act Establishing the State Oversight Council on Children and Families.</p>
Disturbing Individual Case	<p>March 2018 - “Three months before a pregnant 16-year-old died in an apparent suicide at the state-run children’s psychiatric hospital in Middletown late Thursday, public health inspectors had found that the center had failed to properly supervise two suicidal patients and was generally placing the residents in “immediate jeopardy” over gaps in “medical treatment for injuries,” and the “education and training” of staff, according to records obtained Monday.” http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-news-solnit-suicide-inspections-concerns-0703-story.html</p>
Report CALL #5 for RESIGNATION/ #2 for GOV MALLOY TO REPLACE KATZ	<p>December 2017 – Child Advocate Report on Matthew Tirado OCA finds a long history of abuse and neglect, including allegations of abuse involving Matthew. The mother had numerous red flags that the Office of the Child Advocate has consistently pointed out need to be considered and should mandate a high risk categorization, including a past history of DCF involvement and documented mental health problems. Report also confirmed DCF placed mother on The child abuse and neglect registry, specifically acknowledging that she poses a risk to children, and filed a neglect petition in July 2016 and then turned around and terminated the agency’s supervision of Matthew and the family just six months later with absolutely no effort to document Matthew’s wellbeing. According to the report, “Several supervisory directives to the DCF caseworker were not followed between July and December 2016, including to conduct a case consult with the Attorney General’s Office, confirm the family’s whereabouts through their landlord, follow-up with the school system, or request a police well-child safety check.” DCF also had knowledge of the risk as evidenced by their own actions in declaring Ms. Tirado a danger to children. They had received multiple reports from the Hartford Public School during that time period. They had a documented history of abuse and neglect, and yet failed to follow through on their own directives in order to</p>

	<p>assure his safety. The report also contradicts the commissioner’s argument that DCF had no authority to take action. As stated in the report, <i>“No orders were sought from the Juvenile Court by DCF or the children’s attorney to keep the case open until Matthew was found, compel production of the children, permit visitation of Matthew’s sister in school, or seek commitment of either child to state custody—despite grounds for such orders.”</i> DCF knew of the risk, DCF knew of the vulnerability of Matthew, and DCF received several reports from Hartford Public Schools and even Matthew’s sister that should have caused the agency to investigate and examine Matthew. Yet DCF failed to follow its own directives and protocols to ensure Matthew’s safety. The agency failed to avail itself of various options to ensure Matthew’s safety and then closed the case without being able to attest, as required, that doing so was in Matthew’s best interest.</p>
Report	<p>June 2017- Court Monitor Report</p> <p>Too many Connecticut children in foster care are not receiving the mental health services, child care and housing supports they need, partly because the programs are not available and wait lists persist, the federal court monitor overseeing the state’s child welfare agency reported Wednesday.</p> <p>The monitor’s latest bi-annual <u>review</u> of the care provided by the Department of Children and Families showed that in 44 of 106 cases sampled between October and March, children did not have all their needs met. In about a third of the cases, needs went unmet for at least six months. In addition, “issues exist regarding the quality of the investigative work” when abuse or neglect is reported to DCF, court monitor Raymond Mancuso concluded https://ctmirror.org/2017/07/05/federal-monitor-too-many-foster-childrens-needs-still-unmet/</p>
Disturbing Individual Case	<p>April 2017 - Leon Lapierre died after drinking mother’s methadone. Forensic examination of the boy’s body revealed evidence of longer-term exposure to the drug. Questions raised about whether a DCF caseworker truly visited the child’s home three weeks before Leon’s death, as the agency claimed in case records. A DCF caseworker reported that the home was clean during that visit, but others reported conditions in the home were horrific, and could not have come about in just three weeks.</p> <p>http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-stafford-mom-pleads-guilty-0721-story.html.</p>
Report	<p>March 2017 - Federal Audit Children’s Bureau, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families found that the agency practice is inconsistent in assessing safety and risk in the child’s living environment and in preventing children’s removal from their homes.”</p> <p>The audit also found that Connecticut’s child welfare agency is not in substantial conformity with any of the seven child and family outcomes related to children’s safety, permanency, and well-being. http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/upload/2017/04/children-and-families-CT_FinalReport_2016.pdf</p> <p>http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/archives/entry/lawmaker_tells_his_colleagues_to_pay_attention_to_federal_audit_of_child_welfare/</p>

	<p>https://ctmirror.org/2017/03/28/feds-systemic-issues-still-hamper-dcf-care-for-foster-kids/</p> <p>http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-dcf-criticized-child-protection-performance-0329-20170328-story.html</p>
<p>Disturbing Individual Case #1 CALL for GOV MALLOY TO REPLACE KATZ</p>	<p>February 2017 – Death of Matthew Tirado Two letters to Gov. Malloy asking him to replace Katz.</p>
<p>Disturbing Individual Case</p>	<p>December 2016 Baby in DCF Care Died After Being Given Medication: ME http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Baby-in-DCF-Care-Died-After-Being-Given-Medication-ME-425810203.html</p>
<p>Report CALL #4 FOR RESIGNATION</p>	<p>October 4, 2016 - Office of the Child Advocate Investigative Report on the Critical Injuries of Baby Dylan from Abuse and Neglect while in State Custody. Despite significant warning signs that the relative foster home was not safe, including a prior substantiated history of child neglect, violence that included a criminal assault conviction and drug abuse, and despite the fact that more than a dozen DCF employees across four different DCF units were responsible for ensuring Dylan’s safety, Dylan was improperly placed and kept in a dangerous relative home by DCF for 5 months during which he was seriously abused and starved. DCF workers failed to even interact with Dylan to assess his condition for over three months. During each visit, Dylan was “asleep”, a red flag in and of itself for a 15 month old child, and yet the worker failed to awaken him to assess his physical and mental state, monitor his weight or otherwise ensure his wellbeing. Shockingly, the worker seems to think that simply confirming that Dylan was still “breathing” was sufficient. http://www.ct.gov/oaca/lib/oaca/OCA_Investigative_Report_Dylan_C..pdf</p> <p>Summary via the Hartford Courant: http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-foster-care-dcf-child-abuse-1005-20161004-story.html</p> <p>Fasano statement: http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2016/10/fasano-calls-again-for-commissioner-katz-to-resign-amid-child-advocate-report/#.V_VclPkrK70</p>
<p>Report</p>	<p>August 2016 Court Monitor’s Report - Some good news shows that children’s needs met has increased to 66.7 percent - however this is still below the required percentage of needs met to be in compliance with court-ordered goals to improve child welfare. It is also below the percentage of needs met in 2010 before Commissioner Katz took over.¹ https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3008711-Status-Report-2015-2016-Final.html</p>

¹ <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3008711-Status-Report-2015-2016-Final.html>

Disturbing individual cases come to light	May 15, 2016 - Courant report: In Some Cases, DCF Leaves Children In Homes Of Sex Offenders - Courant report reveals that the presence of a sex offender, even someone convicted of molesting a child in the past, is not an automatic disqualifier for placing a child in a household, or allowing a child to remain. This policy is confirmed in a letter from Commissioner Katz to Sen. Fasano. http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-sex-offender-children-0513-20160514-story.html
Disturbing Individual Case	February 18, 2016 – Groton Family Placement Leads to Abuse (Dylan Case Eventually Investigated by OCA – see October 4, 2016) A Groton woman granted temporary custody of her sister's child by the state has been charged with severely neglecting and abusing the 18-month-old boy, who was malnourished and had broken bones and burn marks when he was hospitalized after being removed from the woman's home. http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-child-abuse-dcf-foster-0219-20160218-story.html
Disturbing Individual Case	January 28 2016 - Watertown Couple Abused Children Adopted From DCF Couple charged with two counts of cruelty to persons, unlawful restraint in the second degree and risk of injury to a minor. Couple confined kids to bathroom for months as punishment. 4 of their 5 adoptive children had special needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the summer of 2015, a complaint was made to DCF "concerning excessive discipline and rigid parenting," Child Advocate Sarah Eagan confirmed Friday. "DCF substantiated the complaint and then handed off the case to mental-health providers who were working with the family." • Eagan said DCF did not keep the case open for ongoing supervision of the family after handing it off. • The couple told police during interviews that DCF and the children's therapists were aware that they used isolation in the bathroom as a form of punishment and that they had their permission. http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-watertown-adopt-abuse-0130-20160129-story.html
CALL #3 FOR RESIGNATION	January 20, 2016 – Court Monitor Report Finds More than Half of Kids Needs Not Met Report finds DCF is only meeting the needs of 44.4 percent of the children it serves. That's down from 47.2 percent last year. It's a significant drop from where we were when Commissioner Katz took over in 2010 when DCF met the needs of 67.3% http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2016/01/fasano-statement-on-court-monitors-report-renews-call-for-commissioner-katzs-resignation/
CALL #2 FOR RESIGNATION	December 22, 2015- OCA Report on Death of Londyn S. points to System Failures The 2-year-old girl died on October 19, 2014 as a result of homicide due to Suboxone toxicity, a drug used to treat adults addicted to opioids. Report found that DCF: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failed to adequately assess the risk of children in Londyn's home. 2. Did not open a child protective services investigation following a September 2014 call from police regarding possible physical abuse of Londyn and her baby brother. 3. Inappropriately assigned Londyn's family to the FAR track (a lower risk categorization) on two occasions.

	<p>4. Did not provide an adequate community service plan for the family's serious needs.</p> <p>5. Did not receive complete information from community providers.</p> <p>6. Lacked the needed quality assurance framework to support effective assessment and case planning.</p> <p>http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2015/12/sen-fasano-renews-call-for-commissioner-katz-to-resign-in-light-of-new-report-by-the-child-advocate/</p>
Misc. Failure	<p>November 2015 - DCF missing more than \$100,000 Subsidized Guardianship</p> <p>The Eyewitness News I-Team found that for a half dozen families receiving monthly stipends from DCF after a relative child is placed in their care, the payments didn't stop when child turned 18 (or 21 when in school). The money kept coming, even though it was no longer deserved, and by the time DCF caught on, there was \$107,000 missing. A DCF employee should have been checking the recipient's ages, but no one did.</p> <p>http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2015/11/dcf-missing-more-than-100000-fasano-theres-no-accountability-wfsb/</p>
Misc. Failure	<p>September 16, 2015 - Child Advocate Releases Videos of Restraint/Seclusion</p> <p>http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2015/09/child-advocate-releases-dcf-videos-of-youth-being-restrained-secluded-in-locked-facilities-ct-news-junkie/</p>
Report	<p>July 30, 2015 - Auditors' Report finds in DCF that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees are arriving late and being paid for time not in the office, having debit cards with no accountability, getting mileage reimbursement when they shouldn't, and also found a lack of accountability and control over comp time, longevity payments, accrued vacation and sick time. - Failure to conduct criminal background checks and license foster homes in a timely manner, potentially putting kids at risk. - Wasted money by failing to adequately document expenses that could be eligible for federal reimbursement. <p>http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2015/07/fasano-statement-on-auditors-report-on-dcf/</p>
CALL #1 FOR RESIGNATION	<p>July 23, 2015 –Call to resign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fasano also asked the Attorney General to investigate the conduct of DCF as described in the Child Advocate's report including their failure to investigate whistleblowing complaints regarding the abuse witnessed in DCF's facilities. - Fasano is also asking the co-chairs of the state's Committee on Children, Senator Dante Bartolomeo and Representative Diana Urban, as well as children's advocates, to support his call for Commissioner Katz to resign. <p>http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2015/07/sen-fasano-calls-for-resignation-of-department-of-children-and-families-commissioner-joette-katz/</p>
Report	<p>July 22, 2015 – OCA CJTS/Pueblo Investigative Report Released –Abuse at locked facilities</p> <p>http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/archives/entry/child-advocate-identifies-abuses-at-dcfs-locked-juvenile-facilities/</p> <p>http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/upload/2015/07/OCA_INVESTIGATIVE_CJTS-PUEBLO_REPORT_JULY_22_2015_00000004.pdf</p>

Calling for Action	<p>July 16, 2015 – Fasano Urges Commissioner to Revisit Reform Legislation</p> <p>In light of Court Monitor’s report which found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under Katz’ leadership, DCF has consistently failed to meet 7 critical quality benchmarks, up from 6 in 2010 before she took office. - DCF developed adequate treatment plans for children only 47.2% of the time compared to 86.5% in 2010; successfully met children’s needs only 47.2% of the time compared to 67.3% in 2010. - DCF failed to meet 306 identifiable needs of children in its care. More than 30% increase from just last year and a 125% increase in unmet needs in 2010 (136) <p>http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2015/07/urges-commissioner-to-revisit-reform-legislation/</p>
Report	<p>July 13, 2015 – Report released by Robert Kinscherff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Children and Families said it plans to focus more on rehabilitation and less on restraint and seclusion at its locked facilities for boys and girls in Middletown - Many recommendations in the report describe issues that have been cited by juvenile justice advocates for years. - DCF paid Kinscherff \$40,254. <p>http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/archives/entry/dcf_seeks_to_make_improvements_following_consultants_report/</p>
Disturbing Individual Case	<p>June 15, 2015 - Appeals Court Ruling: DCF Violated Transgender Teen’s Due Process Rights</p> <p>DCF has come under intense scrutiny from dozens of civil liberties advocates over its treatment of Doe — who suffered from previous physical and sexual abuse, spent several weeks under solitary confinement in an adult prison setting, and was publicly shamed by DCF for an allegation involving several other youth.</p> <p>http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/archives/entry/appeals_court_dcf_violated_transgender_teens_due_process_rights/</p>
Disturbing Individual Case	<p>June 2, 2015 - East Haven LeRoya Moore murders two of her children Aleisha Moore, 6, and Daaron Moore, 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child Advocate's Office is investigating why child-protection authorities did not maintain supervision of Moore after 2014 arrest for assaulting her ex-husband in front of the children. - Child Advocate Sarah Eagan questioned why DCF closed its file after the 2014 assault case, despite Moore's history of child-endangerment charges, including a 2006 conviction for risk of injury to a minor, as well as the termination of parental rights for two children from previous relationships. <p>http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-east-haven-child-deaths-mother-charged-20150610-story.html</p>

Report	<p>April 29, 2015 – Federal court monitor: Foster children’s needs still unmet</p> <p>Nearly half of foster children in Connecticut are still not receiving all the mental health services, child care, housing supports they need, partly because the programs not available http://ctmirror.org/2015/04/29/federal-court-monitor-foster-childrens-needs-still-unmet/</p>
Calling for Action	<p>February 5, 2015 – Public Hearing on Fasano DCF bills – Katz says unnecessary</p> <p>Bills Katz rejected included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S.B. No. 307 An Act Implementing a Quality Assurance Program for the Department of Children and Families’ Programs and Facilities - S.B. No. 306 An Act Establishing an Independent Department of Children and Families Ombudsman - S.B. No. 304 An Act Concerning the Connecticut Juvenile Training School Advisory Group - S.B. No. 301 An Act Concerning Transparency within the Department of Children & Families - S.B. No. 308 An Act Concerning an Independent Review of the Department of Children & Families - S.B. No. 310 An Act Strengthening Child Fatality Review Procedures <p>http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2015/02/dcf-katz-and-sen-fasano-square-off-over-agency-oversight-accountability-courant/</p>
Calling for Action	<p>December 23, 2014 – Malloy announces plans to reappoint Katz</p> <p>Fasano Expresses Serious Concerns about closing group homes and a decision by the State Child Advocate in June to investigate the deaths of nine children whose families had been in recent contact with DCF.</p> <p>http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2014/12/malloy-to-reappoint-dcf-commissioner-joette-katz-fasano-expresses-serious-concerns-ct-news-junkie/</p>
Cuts	<p>November 20, 2014 – Malloy Cuts \$9.2 million from DCF as part of rescissions</p> <p>\$455,125 cut to child abuse and neglect intervention, a \$415,039 cut to community based prevention programs, and a \$94,610 cut to family violence outreach and counseling – all programs focused on preventing child fatalities. Also includes \$6 million cut to residential board and care for children. http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2014/11/sen-fasano-questions-malloys-cuts-to-dcf-in-light-of-child-deaths-group-home-closures/</p>
Disturbing Individual Case	<p>October 19, 2014 - Death of Londyn S.</p> <p>The 2-year-old girl died s a result of homicide due to Suboxone toxicity, a drug used to treat adults addicted to opioids.</p>
Report	<p>July 31, 2014 – Child Fatality Review Report (2013) Finds “unprecedented” number of child homicides where kids should have been protected by DCF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of the 38 non-natural deaths in 2013 of children birth to age 3, the majority of children lived in families that had current or previous involvement with the Department of Children and Families. - 22 children died due to abuse and neglect; 16 of these children had active cases

	<p>with DCF and should have been monitored and protected by the agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In many cases, DCF seems to have willfully ignored multiple known risk factors, such as drug abuse and a known history of family violence, in order keep the child in the home and avoid out of home placements. <p>http://www.ct.gov/oca/lib/oca/Final_OCA_Infant_Toddler_Fatality_Report.pdf</p>
Calling for Action	<p>June 30, 2014 - Senator Fasano Questions Policy to Remove Child Abusers from State Registry</p> <p>Letter to Katz demands answers concerning a potentially dangerous department policy shift. DCF has implemented a policy that now allows some individuals on the agency's Child Abuse and Neglect Registry to petition for removal from that list just two years after committing acts of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/2014/06/senator-fasano-questions-policy-to-remove-child-abusers-from-state-registry/</p>
Disturbing Individual Case	<p>September 29, 2013 - Ayden Baskay (20 months) died, head injury from father</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was not the first time the father, Christian Williams, had beaten his son. In May of 2012, baby Ayden was rushed to the hospital with bleeding on the brain. DCF was notified. - Rather than actively monitoring the situation, DCF simply instructed the mother not to allow the child to be alone with Mr. Williams and closed its case in just one month. <p>http://www.newstimes.com/local/article/Dad-investigated-for-abuse-a-year-before-child-s-4872968.php</p>
Report	<p>June 2013 – Georgetown Report shows need for juvenile justice reforms</p> <p>The study done by the Georgetown Center for Juvenile Justice and paid for by the included a comprehensive evaluation of DCF's juvenile justice programs and facilities. It highlighted many of the issues advocates continue to raise concerns about.</p> <p>https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1383850-ctparolereport-nov-final.html</p>
Disturbing Individual Case	<p>November 23, 2011 - Athena Angeles beaten to death by mother's boyfriend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Despite receiving multiple warnings about the abuse from a Willimantic health clinic doctor and the Head Start workers who cared for Athena, DFC failed to conduct a thorough investigation - In violation of its own guidelines, DCF did not even bother to interview the boyfriend, who later admitted to police that he punched and stuck Athena on multiple occasions. - DCF workers were dismissive of the Head Start workers' concerns and made the workers feel uncomfortable when they continued to raise alarms about Athena's well being. <p>http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-athena-angeles-sentencing-0121-20150120-story.html</p>