

Department of Children and Families Online Dashboard Working Group Report

Pursuant to Public Act 26-26, An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency
Connecticut General Assembly's Committee on Children
October 1st, 2026



State of Connecticut

STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

I. Background and Summary of Working Group and HB5004

In the wake of multiple high profile child abuse cases in Connecticut with children under the care of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), legislators worked in the 2026 session to bring improvements to the Department and ensure the safety of the state's children. HB5004, An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency, contained provisions that covered different components and programs of the Department. Examples include new training and life-alert buttons for social workers, stipend programs for mentors, new protocols for monitoring child abuse cases, and resources for relative or fictive kin caregivers. Additionally, the bill created an ad hoc oversight body to review child welfare programs and policies and provide legislative recommendations to resolve any issues that impede the state's ability to maintain the safety and wellbeing of children. This body is composed of legislators, executive agency members, judicial branch members, and those working in child welfare in the private sector.

One of the central pillars of the bill was the establishment of a public-facing dashboard for DCF that would display real-time data on the work of the Department. Section 11 of the bill states that:

...Such information shall include, but need not be limited to, the information identified by the working group established pursuant to section 12 of this act...Such dashboard shall (A) be integrated with any electronic data collection and tracking tools utilized by the department to ensure that such information is consistently and continually updated, and (B) present such information in a manner that permits users to access and understand such information without specialized knowledge or training. (2) Information for the public concerning offices, programs and services administered and offered by the department, including, but not limited to, the Office of Community Relations, housing and homelessness programs, the Careline established pursuant to section 17a-103a of the general statutes and text message programs. (3) Information concerning the identification of child abuse and neglect and how to report child abuse and neglect to the department. (4) The educational training program developed pursuant to section 17a-101 of the general statutes, in a video format that members of the public may access without

creating a username or password for use on such Internet web site, and any accompanying training materials.

II. Working Group's Charge

Section 12 of the bill created a working group of legislators and DCF staff to build the dashboard and decide what data could feasibly be included. An additional focal point in the group's work is to ensure that the dashboard is constructed in a way that is accessible and easy for the public to navigate. Legislators identified relevant information surrounding the administration and performance of DCF's social services - such as the training modules for social workers, number of open cases, outcomes of cases, and staff turnovers - as essential to achieve the bill's intent of transparency with the public. The group is tasked with submitting a report on its progress and findings to the Committee on Children by October 1st, 2026.

III. Members

A. Elected Officials

1. Sen. Ceci Maher
2. Rep. Mary Welander
3. Sen. Julie Kushner
4. Sen. Jason Perillo
5. Rep. Amy Morrin Bello
6. Rep. Treneé McGee
7. Rep. Rebecca Martinez
8. Rep. Sarah Keitt
9. Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw
10. Rep. Jaime Foster
11. Rep. Eilish Collins Main
12. Rep. Kai Belton

B. DCF Staff

1. DCF Commissioner Susan Hamilton
2. Chandra Hegde - IT Manager

3. Fred North - Program Director for the Bureau of Continuous Quality Improvement, Office of Data Reporting and Evaluation
 4. Iancu Nicolae - IT Manager
 5. Michael Carone - Legislative Program Director
 6. Rosemary Wieworka - Chief of Quality Improvement
- C. CT Data Collaborative Staff
1. Michelle Riordan-Nold - Executive Director
- D. Administrative staff
1. Mia Giglietti - the committee clerk for the Committee on Children

IV. Meetings, Presentations, and Discussions

A. Meeting schedule - 2026

1. July 21st
 - a) [Agenda](#)
 - b) [Meeting minutes](#)
2. August 18th
 - a) [Agenda](#)
 - b) [Meeting minutes](#)
3. September 1st
 - a) [Agenda](#)
 - b) [Meeting Minutes](#)
4. September 8th
 - a) [Agenda](#)
 - b) [Meeting Minutes](#)
5. September 15th
 - a) [Agenda](#)
 - b) [Meeting Minutes](#)
6. September 22nd
 - a) [Agenda](#)
 - b) [Meeting Minutes](#)
7. September 29th

- a) [Agenda](#)
- b) No Meeting Minutes → editing of this report

B. Presentations and Discussions

In the first few meetings, the members clarified their priorities for the dashboard. DCF staff stated that they already had several applicable data sets along with a mock-up of the dashboard and presented those to the group. The members discussed how they will divide up the dashboard geographically in a way that is suitable for a wide audience of users while also providing an adequate level of information to achieve transparency. A sample webpage from DCF's IT team included a home page, report and information page, performance category page, and a measure-specific page. The legislators requested a glossary page that could provide definitions for those unfamiliar with the acronyms used on the site.

As the meetings progressed, the group talked about pre-existing data sets, results oriented management reports (ROM), and federal reporting requirements that can be used for the dashboard. Data on group homes and congregate care, children's access to mental health services, timeliness, permanency, and instances of repeat maltreatment appeared as common priorities to include in the dashboard to allow users to understand and evaluate the Department's performance. Moreover, the group agreed that information on outcomes for youth aging out - such as how many graduate from high school and receive post-care services like funding for post-secondary education - are crucial to understand if children in the system are receiving the care that they need.

Alongside those parameters, the members highlighted disparity measures as a key component to identifying discrepancies and achieving equitable outcomes. By using data that DCF tracks regarding race, ethnicity, age, and disability, the dashboard could display better visibility on any disparities that could then assist the public, legislators, and DCF in addressing these issues. During these discussions, the group also decided on the types of graphs and charts that would be best suited to visualize the different data sets.

In the last few meetings, the members differentiated between what sets of information would be static reports and which would be updated live on the website. They also established the importance of providing the public with information demonstrating the successes and accomplishments of the Department in reuniting families and providing them with the behavioral

health services and other supports that they need. In that same vein, legislators made an additional request to include data on the accessibility of behavioral health services for children in congregate care and STARR homes to ensure that the Department is meeting policy requirements and best practice standards.

V. Key Findings and Recommendations

Sen. Maher and Rep. Welander stated that the group will reconvene after the completion of the report and construction of the dashboard to evaluate the website developed by DCF and make any necessary adjustments. To ensure that the site does not become overburdened by data and create lag, the information included will only go back 10 years, and it will receive quarterly updates wherever possible, in some instances the information contained will be updated on a yearly basis. The site will include a glossary page to clarify terms and acronyms within DCF to make the site more usable.

A. Tab One - Regional Map

The first tab will be a map of the different regions of the state based on the location of the DCF regional offices. Central data points will include the quarterly number of cases, types of cases, number of social workers per office, and number of cases closed in the past 30 days. The page could also show a funnel of how cases move through the pipeline (an example was shown by DCF at one of the meetings). In addition, the page will have a disclaimer that states how frequently the information is updated, and that there will be a phased-in approach to implementation. Data on staff turnover and retention will be produced quarterly and made available through a hyperlink. To evaluate any disparities and disproportionalities between groups of people being served by DCF, the page will present equity data quarterly on age, race, and ethnicity.

B. Tab Two - Federal Metrics

The second tab of the site will include a link to the federal measures and compare them with the performance metrics of the Department to determine where the state stands in achieving federal best practice standards.

C. Tab Three - Permanency Data

The third tab of the site will detail information on permanency both statewide and by region. To that end, the display will include information showing the greatest regional concentration, including placement, discharge, and statistics on re-entry into the system. Permanency timeliness, or the time to reunification, adoption, or guardianship, will be an additional component of the page. In addition, data on the outcomes of and services for youth who age out of DCF care (i.e., access to housing, education, and wraparound supports) will be available.

D. Tab Four - Safety Data

The fourth tab will cover different data sets on safety measures, which encompasses in-person visitations, number of cases referred to Family Assessment Response (FAR), and substantiated versus unsubstantiated cases by office. There will be automated reports on the regional map for quantitative data and links to static reports for qualitative data. To evaluate if each regional office is meeting its goals, the page will display repeat reports of maltreatment data and in-person visits for children both in the home, and for children placed outside the home. This information will include qualitative in-home reviews composed of differential response and composite scores to assess the safety of children being served by DCF, especially if they are re-entering care.

E. Tab Five - Prevention Data

The fifth tab will cover prevention measures and their outcome data to determine if the Department is properly investing in and utilizing prevention programs. To provide further transparency, the page will show information regarding the list of prevention programs that DCF funds and contracts with, including waitlists for program services as reported through the contractors. In future meetings of the working group, the members will discuss the inclusion of other prevention tools and data provided by the Department to the families whom they serve.

F. Tab Six - Administration/HR

The sixth tab will contain information on the administration of the Department, with data on staff ratios, caseloads by social workers, turnover rates by office, and the number of training

modules required, offered, and utilized by social workers on a yearly basis. These reports will be utilized to evaluate if there is any correlation between the completion of training modules and retention of case workers.

G. Tab Seven - Behavioral Health

The seventh tab will cover data on the behavioral health services provided by the Department, such as in-patient and out-patient populations and the number of re-entries into care. Due to the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning (TCB) Committee's work on a separate dashboard that will display similar data in a more detailed fashion, this page will not contain information with as much specificity. It will also provide a hyperlink to the TCB dashboard.

H. Tab Eight - Congregate Care and Group Homes

The eighth tab will present information on congregate care and group homes, primarily through data on the number of children, staff ratios, and staff turnovers by type of congregate care facility. Moreover, this will include general interventions or supports, such as behavioral health services, that the children being served by the Department receive. These same metrics for Solnit facilities will be incorporated as well.

I. Tab Nine - Static Reports and Quality Assurance

The final tab of the dashboard will contain links to static reports such as Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs), Results-Oriented Management reports (ROMs), Carelon reports, Quality Improvement (QI) and Differential Response System (DRS) reports, and in-home (IH) reports. Additionally, there will be a glossary that defines terms and acronyms used on the site to make it user-friendly. The reports, in tandem with information on the process of becoming a foster family and what supports exist for them, will be separate from the other pages because it will not consist of live data that is being updated.

In addition, to meet the statutory requirements of PA 26-26, the DCF website will include, if it does not already, information for the public concerning offices, programs, and services administered and offered by the Department. This includes, but is not limited to, the Office of Community Relations, housing and homelessness programs, information concerning

the identification of child abuse and neglect and how to report child abuse and neglect to the Department, the educational training program developed pursuant to section 17a-101 of the general statutes in a video format that members of the public may access without creating a username or password for the website, and any accompanying training materials.

VI. Conclusion

The working group will reconvene on December 8th, 2026, to provide feedback on functional improvements or additional information that can be added to the website to increase transparency on the functioning of the Department and the outcomes of those in its care. Once the dashboard is established and running, both legislators and DCF staff will monitor its performance. The Working Group recommends to the newly established Child Welfare Policy and Oversight Committee that a subgroup of that committee be tasked with monitoring and refining the DCF data dashboard ongoingly.