

**ENSURE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
MAXIMIZES FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENTS AND MEETS ITS
COMMITMENT TO PROTECT CHILDREN BY SUPPORTING THEIR FAMILIES**

*Preserve these no-cost reporting requirements in
DCF's Administrative Account (line item 4800-0015) in the FY 2012 DCF budget*

Supporting Kinship Placements

DCF's written policy is to prioritize placing children with kinship families and supporting those families in meeting the child's needs, (*DCF Family Resource Policy 2006-01 at 385.1*), but area offices vary in their implementation of this commitment. This language encourages the department to support kinship foster care as one means of keeping children within their families and connected to their racial, ethnic linguistic, cultural and religious heritage.

Tracking States' Efforts to Maximize Federal Reimbursement for Kinship Guardianship Payments

Under the Federal Fostering Connections to Success Act, DCF may seek federal reimbursement for payments the Department makes to qualifying kinship guardians. DCF had already recognized the importance of kinship guardians when it implemented its kinship guardianship payment program (*110 CMR 7.300 – 303*). This tracking language enables the legislature to monitor the extent to which DCF is maximizing federal funds to help implement its pre-existing commitment to support kinship guardianships.

Tracking DCF's Provision of Services to Keep Children Safely in their Homes

Although 90% of DCF's caseload consists of children living in their homes or whose goal is to return to their families, DCF allocates only approximately 8% of its total services budget to providing services to keep children safely in, or return them to, their homes. The department spends most of the rest of its services budget on foster care and adoption. The proposed line item language will allow the legislature to track how DCF area offices decide what services to provide to fulfill the department's core mandate to "direct its efforts, first, to the strengthening and encouraging of family life for the care and protection of children."

Tracking DCF's Provision of Emergency Shelter

DCF provides emergency shelter to homeless children and families and to victims of domestic violence. With rising homelessness and tightened EA shelter eligibility requirements for homeless families, this tracking language will enable the legislature to track to what extent DCF shelters are available to protect these vulnerable populations.

Tracking DCF's Provision of Voluntary Services

DCF plans to drastically reduce the voluntary services that families seek to address risks to their children before they become crises. Many voluntary services are cost effective because they can avert far more costly and intrusive DCF intervention down the road. This tracking language will enable the legislature to monitor what voluntary services DCF cuts.

**PLEASE ASK CHAIRMAN BREWER TO PRESERVE
THIS NO-COST LINE ITEM LANGUAGE IN DCF'S BUDGET**

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NO COST LINE ITEM LANGUAGE IN LINE ITEM 4800-0015
(Currently in FY 2011 budget and in House FY 2012 budget)

After “is more appropriate for group care;” *insert the following:* “provided further, that if a placement of a child with someone other than a parent becomes necessary, the department shall place the highest priority on identifying a family resource within the child’s kinship or family circle and shall provide services and support to partner with the family in meeting the child’s needs”

And after “ before receiving an out-of-home placement;” *insert the following:* “provided further, that the report shall also contain, for each area office, the number of kinship guardianship subsidies provided in the month covered by the report, and the number of kinship guardianship subsidies provided in that month for which federal reimbursement was received; provided further, that the report shall also contain, for each area office, the total spending on services other than case management services provided to families for the purposes of keeping a child with his parents or reunifying the child with his parents, spending by type of the service, and the unduplicated number of families that receive the services; provided further, that the report shall also contain for each area office, the total number of families in the month residing in shelter paid for by the department, a list of where the families are sheltered, the total cost and average cost per family of those shelters, and a description of how the department determines who does or does not qualify for shelter; provided further, that the report shall include, for each area office, broken down by type of service, the number of requests for voluntary services, whether the request was approved or denied, the reasons for denying the service, and what, if any, referrals were made for services by other agencies or entities;”