



New Jersey Department of Human Services Office of Children's Services EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

Communicate: New Jersey's education professionals - teachers, administrators and other school personnel - are the largest community of child advocates in the state. For this reason and because the best interests of children are so important to education professionals, the Department of Human Services will make a special effort to inform and involve this community in the state's bold and ambitious reform plan: "A New Beginning: The Future of Child Welfare in New Jersey."

Coordinate: The Department of Human Services (DHS) will extensively coordinate services with the Department of Education (DOE), local school districts, administrators, teachers, students and their families in order to enhance and promote the safety, permanency and well-being of the children of New Jersey.

Collaborate: DHS and DOE, New Jersey's two state departments with primary responsibility for services to children, are committed to developing a strong collaboration with each other at all levels, in order to better provide seamless services to children and families, best practices and strong community partnerships in child welfare and education.

KEY AREAS OF REFORM FOR EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS:

The keystones of the child welfare reform plan are the safety, permanency and well-being of children and strengthening community collaboration to enhance networks of prevention services available to children and families before a crisis occurs. Professional educators have a role to play in each of these keystone areas.

- ✓ **Safety** - School administrators, teachers and staff are key members of New Jersey's child protection system as primary reporters of allegations of abuse and neglect to the new statewide, toll free, Child Abuse Hotline 1-877 NJ ABUSE - available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
- ✓ **Permanency** - The child welfare reform plan provides that, in the majority of cases, foster care children are to continue to attend their home schools. Education professionals have a significant role to play in providing continuity of routine and education when a child must be placed in out-of-home care and in providing support and welcome without delay or stigma to those children in care who must change schools.
- ✓ **Well-being** - Education professionals will be important participants in the planning and services provided to children who need OCS services including involvement in DYFS family team meetings, coordination of tutoring, before and after school care, and other supportive programs for children in school, including assisting resource families with greater involvement in their children's education.
- ✓ **Strengthening Community Collaboration** - School leaders will be essential participants in the development of networks of community services and support that will serve to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect before it happens. The successful School Based Youth Services Program is an example of this type of community service.

For more information log on to www.dhs.state.nj.us or contact
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