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Press Release

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Statement from Governor Hassan on Independent Review of DCYF

CONCORD - Governor Maggie Hassan issued the following statement on the release of the independent review by the Center for the Support of Families (CSF) of the child protective services of the Division of Children Youth and Families (DCYF):

"It is the fundamental responsibility of our society to protect our children and ensure that every child has the opportunity to live and grow in a safe environment. Any missed opportunity to save a child's life, or to save a child from harm, is a tragedy, which is why we undertook this independent review to help ensure that New Hampshire has the staff, policies and laws in place necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of our children.

"While the Center for the Support of Families' report found some strong areas of practice at the Division of Children Youth and Families, such as initial screening decisions, it also clearly outlined a number of steps that New Hampshire must take in order to better protect our children, including increasing staff, improving training and improving our laws and policies. The review makes clear that while the goal of reunifying families is critical, it cannot come at the expense of a child's safety, and this report puts forward a number of policy and statutory recommendations to help improve our system.

"I thank the Center for the Support of Families for their diligent work and expertise in conducting this review, as well as of the stakeholders who participated in this important process. I urge the Governor-elect and the legislature to work toward implementing these recommendations through the budget process and other legislation, because I know that we all share the same goal – doing everything that we can to prevent tragedies in the future and to ensure the safety and well-being of our children."

[Governor Hassan announced the independent review of DCYF](#) last October following concerns raised by law enforcement and other stakeholders, and [the contract for CSF to conduct the review was approved by the Executive Council](#) earlier this year.

In preparation for the review, the Department of Justice partnered with DCYF to provide training so that case workers can better identify potential crimes when evaluating cases of abuse and neglect, and the Department of Health Human Services developed a plan to allow for 24-hour, seven-day a week responses to reports of child abuse, for which the Executive Council will consider a contract at this week's meeting.

[Governor Hassan signed several bipartisan bills this year as part of her efforts to protect New Hampshire's children](#), including Senate Bill 515, which strengthens the Child Protection Act regarding potential opioid abuse of a parent or guardian; Senate Bill 536, relative to emergency interim relief under the child protection act; Senate Bill 538, relative to children taken into custody under the child protection act and relative to the commission to review child abuse fatalities, and Senate Bill 539, relative to access to records under the child protection act.

[The full review conducted by CSF is available at www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/publications.htm.](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/publications.htm)

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