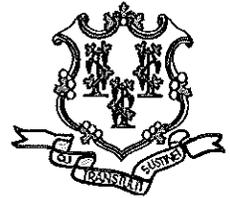




**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**Public Hearing Testimony  
Human Services Committee  
March 13, 2012**



***H.B. No. 5453 AN ACT CONCERNING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE***

The Department of Children and Families **supports** H.B. No. 5453 - An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Trauma-Informed Care.

This bill is consistent with the policy direction of the Department of Children and Families. Commissioner Katz has established trauma-informed practice as one of six overarching themes at DCF. Last fall, DCF was awarded a five year \$3.2 million grant by the federal Administration for Children and Families to enhance DCF's capacity to identify and respond to children who have experienced trauma, and to enhance access to evidence-based and best practice interventions in the community. The initiative, called the Connecticut Collaborative on Effective Practices for Trauma (CONCEPT), is a partnership between DCF, the Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) and Yale University. DCF is among only five agencies in the country to receive this highly-competitive grant.

DCF is working to coordinate our domestic violence screening and consultation activities with those of the CONCEPT grant. CONCEPT will offer children in the child welfare system the opportunity to overcome the impact of trauma and enjoy a more positive future. The goal of CONCEPT is two-fold: (1) to enhance the Department's capacity to identify and respond to children who have experienced trauma; and (2) to increase access to evidence-based and best-practice interventions in the community.

More than 25 percent of American youth experience some form of trauma, including physical or sexual abuse, neglect, and/or exposure to community violence, death, accident or chronic illness. Considerably more children in the child welfare system have experienced trauma, often multiple times, and they exhibit significant behavioral or emotional problems as a result. Children exposed to trauma can develop chronic symptoms, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression. The rate of children in foster care diagnosed with PTSD is as high as 60 percent among sexually abused foster children, 24 percent among physically abused children, and 18 percent among children who have not experienced either physical or sexual abuse.

Children and families throughout Connecticut will benefit by incorporating trauma-informed practice across the various service systems that respond to domestic violence issues.