



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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QUESTIONS FOR CHILD ADVOCATE NOMINEE

By: Katherine Dwyer, Legislative Analyst II

1. What do you see as the most pressing needs of Connecticut's children and youth?
2. The child advocate is a permanent member of the state's child fatality review board, which reviews unexpected or unexplained deaths of children from birth through age 17 and primarily focuses on the fatalities of children involved in state systems. The board recommended in 2011 that the state "support efforts related to stemming youth violence and access to weapons." In light of the recent events in Newtown, can you provide any specific examples of efforts that need to be made to address these issues?
3. What changes, if any, would you like to see in the delivery and availability of mental health services for Connecticut children?

4. One of the child advocate's responsibilities is to review state agency procedures for providing services to children with a view toward promoting children's rights. What rights do you believe children have? How do their rights mesh with their parents' or caretakers' rights?
5. In what ways do you feel that your work as executive director for Connecticut Voices for Children prepared you for the role of child advocate?
6. The child advocate is responsible for recommending policy changes in various areas, including to the state's system of providing foster care. What policy change would you most like to see in this area?
7. Many of our child welfare laws are based on the concept of "best interest of the child." What does this phrase mean to you?
8. The "Raise the Age" legislation recently extended our juvenile justice system's jurisdiction to 16- and 17-year olds. Are there any policy changes you would like to see in order for the juvenile courts and detention facilities to accommodate this older population?
9. The Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS) is a secure facility for juvenile boys committed as delinquents to Department of Children and Families custody. While at CJTS, the boys receive a variety of services to prepare them to successfully reenter the community. There is no comparable facility for girls committed to DCF as delinquents. Do you see this issue as a priority for the Office of the Child Advocate, and, if so, what steps would you like to take to address it?

KD:tjo