



B. J. Walker, Commissioner

Georgia Department of Human Resources • Division of Family and Children Services • Mark A. Washington, Assistant Commissioner
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Dear Georgia child welfare provider services community,

Over the last 2 months since I began as DHR Assistant Commissioner, I have devoted much of my time to learning and listening, and hearing from those - both internally and externally - that deliver key services to children in DFCS custody. I understand and empathize with you over the systematic impacts of the last several years on your business model and the need for heightened partnership and communication with DFCS and the forward vision. I am committed to a meaningful relationship based on transparency and accountability as the DFCS chief.

To that end, and in alignment with the commitment by Commissioner Walker to engage with you in a "Provider Summit" to further define the mutual needs, I want to extend an invitation to each of you to participate with key DFCS management in a meeting in metro Atlanta, where we can dialogue around the specific service array, and behavioral treatment needs of children and youth as a part of the practice model and the continued system transformation.

At the initial meeting, we will also identify key participants to serve on smaller workgroups that can serve alongside DFCS staff to continue the identification and development of the care continuum, funding opportunities and outcome elements.

The provider workgroup is just one strategy I plan to implement to ensure we collectively meet our goals of providing services that keep children, youth, and families safe, stable, and self-sufficient.

These meetings will present a time to reaffirm;

- 1) Partnership values, goals, roles, and resources.
- 2) Program strategies mutually developed by the state and service providers.
- 3) Predictable funding models that support stable performance focused.

I envision our development work together to consume the next 6 months but should serve as a foundation of sustainability for the years to follow.

To further prove my commitment to this process, I have assigned a senior aide within my office to stakeholder and provider engagement. This staff person will be responsible for ensuring that communications remain open and productive, responding to high level inquiries regarding major systematic changes, and coordinate ongoing meetings with the provider community.

Thank you for your work on behalf of the children and youth we mutually serve.

With You, For Them,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark A. Washington".

Mark A. Washington
Assistant Commissioner