

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** All Staff

**From:** Susan I Hamilton, M.S.W., J.D.

**Date:** Friday, September 25, 2009

**Subject:** Differential Response Model

**Strengthening and Supporting Families through a Differential Response Model  
DCF's Drive to DRS**

One of the more fundamental shifts in child welfare practice today, which has been embraced in Connecticut, is embodied in a reform effort known as Differential Response System (DRS). DRS is an approach that allows child protection agencies to differentiate their response to accepted reports of child abuse and neglect based on such factors as the type and severity of the alleged maltreatment, the number of previous reports, and the motivation and cooperation of the parent in addressing safety concerns.

The Department's efforts to implement DRS statewide have yielded solid implementation plans and a multitude of DRS related activities that are currently underway. However, implementation has had to be governed by fiscal realities in this state, and a staged implementation strategy is now emerging. To effectively account for the complexity, size and scope of this change in practice, the next phase of implementation will carefully examine the community readiness for DRS in each of DCF's five regions.

More specifically, the Department has recently completed a DRS Community Readiness Planning Request for Quotation which resulted in a contract award to Casey Family Services to begin to coordinate regional planning activities. Ultimately, the Department will have a blueprint submitted for the successful implementation of DRS in each region. This facilitated planning process involving DCF and members of the community will publically begin in the next few weeks.

Associated with this planning effort, internal DCF focus groups by region also will be formed in the coming weeks. The data collected from the focus groups will inform our planning efforts and are intended to place an emphasis on front line Social Worker and Supervisor feedback on the concept of differential response and how it might function in Connecticut.

For more information on DRS and the Department's implementation plans, click on this [Background link](#) for a brief overview, or feel free to review DRS specific documentation and information by accessing the [DRS](#) page on the DCF website.

Thank you for all the contributions you make to this critically important work for children and families.