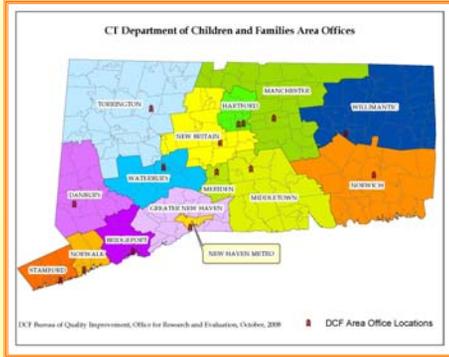


# GETTING INVOLVED SPATIALLY

## CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OFFICE FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION OFFICE OF FOSTER CARE SERVICES

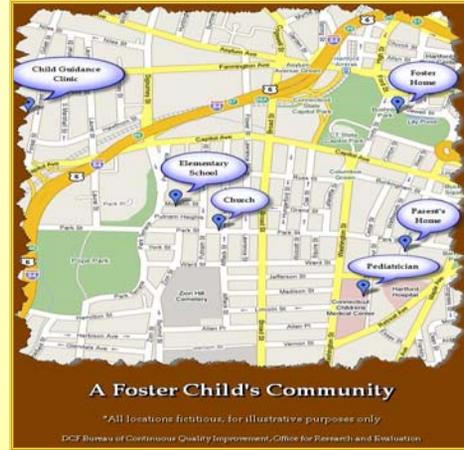
### OUR AGENCY & GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) VISION



The mission of the Department of Children and Families is to protect children, improve child and family well-being and support and preserve families throughout the State of Connecticut. These efforts are accomplished by respecting and working with individual cultures and communities, and in partnership with others. Currently we are organized into 15 Area Offices with operations serving the geographical areas as shown in the map below.

The Office for Research and Evaluation of the Bureau of Continuous Quality Improvement, and the Office of Foster Care Services of the Bureau of Child Welfare are collaborating to introduce Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to DCF. We are grateful to Casey Family Programs for providing customized GIS training to our personnel. We look forward to a continued partnership with Casey in using GIS as a means of supporting our shared vision to reduce the number of children in foster care and eliminate racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children in care.

### FROM A CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

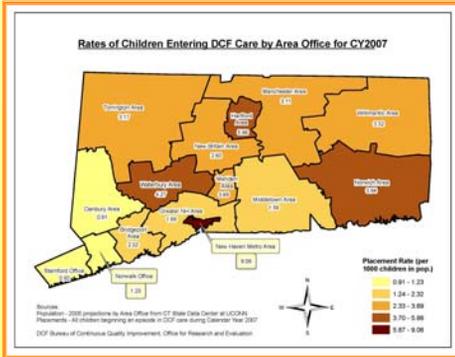


Our map entitled "A Foster Child's Community" expresses our vision of using GIS operationally to support our work on behalf of children and families. In this prototype map, we map community from a child's point of view, showing the people and places that make up the child's daily life and the spatial relationships among them. Such child-centered computer-generated mapping is not yet developed, but we believe it holds great promise as another tool to improve our practice.

Other examples of operational GIS applications include utilities to support the matching of a child to an available foster home, or to support emergency and natural disaster planning related to children in care.

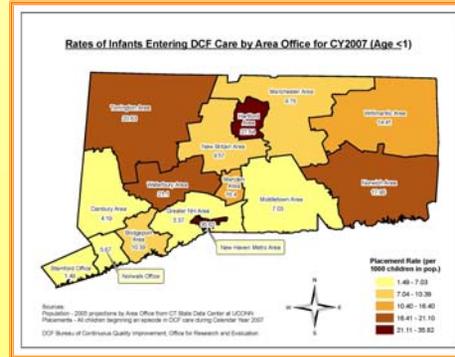
### WHERE DO OUR CHILDREN COME FROM?

DCF recognizes the importance of family and strives to support children in their homes and communities. When this is not possible, a placement such as foster care, which is designed to meet the child's individualized needs within a family setting, is pursued.



The map to your left shows the rate of entry to DCF care in calendar year 2007 for each of DCF's 15 Area Offices. Children residing within the New Haven Metro, Hartford, Waterbury and Norwich Areas have higher rates than the rest of the state.

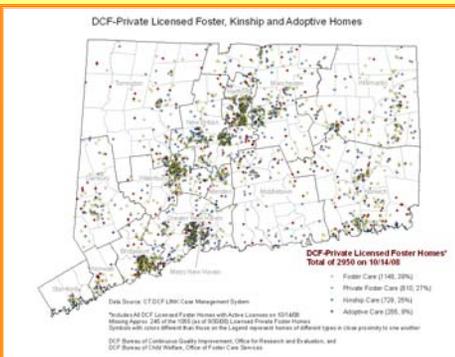
Children residing in the Danbury and Norwalk/Stamford Areas have much lower rates than the rest of the state. However, this display does not control for differences in the underlying populations in those geographical areas.



Age of the child at entry to foster care is related to the rate of entry. The map to your left shows that infants enter care at much higher rates than the overall average for every Area Office.

Further analyses of placement rates concerning other factors such as our children's race/ethnicity are planned for the future.

### WHERE DO THEY GO?



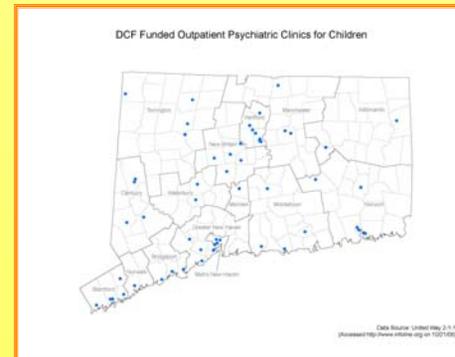
When children enter DCF care, they are placed with kin (relatives or others important to the child) or foster homes whenever possible. On any given day the Department provides foster care services to over 3,000 children. These homes facilitate the reunification of children with their families or establish another permanent home.

This map illustrates the location of DCF licensed foster, kinship and adoptive homes in the state of Connecticut. Our next step is to examine the relationship between the home communities of children and the community where they are placed.

The Department continues to seek additional foster and adoptive homes, and mentors for foster children. Should you have interest in becoming a mentor, foster parent or in adopting a child please contact 1-888-KID-HERO, and

*Place Yourself on the Map!*

### WHO IS THERE TO HELP?



DCF is also responsible for providing a comprehensive statewide system of behavioral health and substance abuse services and related supports for children, adolescents and their families. This map shows the location of one such service, the DCF-funded Outpatient Psychiatric Clinics for Children (OPCC).

The key function of an OPCC is to provide behavioral health services to children, adolescents and their families. Both primary and satellite sites are shown on the map. There are clinics within every DCF Area Office boundary, but local services are less available and accessible in outlying areas of the state.