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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

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**Contract Correspondence Transmittal (CCT)**

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Dear PCC/PCP Provider,

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is in the process of revolutionizing its response for addressing the behavioral health needs of children in Kentucky. Research shows the impact of trauma and unmet behavioral health needs in children results in compromised functioning in areas such as physical and mental health as well as disruptive behaviors. For those having worked with children in out-of-home care such difficulties are all too familiar. They routinely present complications for service provision, placement stability, and permanency. Moreover there is a growing body of research showing that those who experience trauma as children later become adults with an array of complex challenges such as substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues.

The impact of trauma therefore extends beyond the current out-of-home care population and into future generations.

A federally-funded initiative, SAFESPACE offers a tangible opportunity to facilitate secondary prevention within the child welfare population through systematic trauma screening and functional assessment of behavioral health needs. The following components highlight the opportunities available through SAFESPACE:

- Behavioral health and trauma screening of children entering out-of-home care.
- Standardized functional assessment and periodic reassessment to identify needs and measure progress.
- Enhancement of evidence-based treatments.
- Use of the evidence from assessment and treatment to inform DCBS case planning and case monitoring.

SAFESPACE will first be piloted in two DCBS service regions (i.e. Northeastern and Southern Bluegrass) but will be rolled out statewide by year 5. In order to move this work forward input will be needed from providers and DCBS staff throughout the state. Below are the mechanisms for how input will be solicited.

## **Focus Groups**

This month the SAFESPACE evaluation team will begin conducting its first round of focus groups with pilot region providers and DCBS staff. Information will be sought regarding local collaboration, service delivery, and capacity building. Additional focus groups may be needed in the future for receiving feedback related to the proposed tools as well as case planning and monitoring processes.

## **Surveys**

This summer an online survey will be disseminated to providers (e.g. CMHCs, PCCs/PCPs) and DCBS staff. The survey will obtain similar information collected through the focus groups but on a larger scale. Participants will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift card.

Staff engagement is essential in the enhancement of behavioral health needs of children in out-of-home care. This is your staff's opportunity to impact SAFESPACE decisions and have a voice in the process. The SAFESPACE project team needs their expertise! Please encourage staff to participate. Questions may be directed to Nicole George ([Nicole.george@ky.gov](mailto:Nicole.george@ky.gov)) or Dr. Becky Antle ([becky.antle@louisville.edu](mailto:becky.antle@louisville.edu)).