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DHHS Disagrees with Foster Care Review Board Assessment
Families Matter Reform Producing Better Outcomes for Children & Families

Lincoln – The Department of Health and Human Services is calling on the Foster Care Review Board to identify positives and move forward with Families Matter, Nebraska’s child welfare and juvenile services initiative.

“We are working to create better outcomes for children by making necessary changes,” said Todd Reckling, director of the Division of Children and Family Services in DHHS.

“The report issued by the Foster Care Review Board focuses on the policies of the past and seems to advocate a return to practices of the past.

“These families matter and we are focused on providing better support for children and families. We are focused on improving outcomes for families and we are already seeing progress.”

Reckling and DHHS officials disagree with the Board’s data and assessment of the child welfare reform effort. The Department has produced data that demonstrates positive changes that have taken place in the initial stages of the reform. That data shows children are safe, more families are receiving services, and that fewer children are in out-of-home care.

“We have shared this information with the Foster Care Review Board but they seem to be looking backward while we are focused on improvements,” he said. “Change is not easy and we know there are challenges, but we have renewed our efforts to reach out to stakeholders and we call upon the Board to be a constructive partner.

The goal of the Families Matter reform is focused on having fewer children become state wards, serving more children in family settings, and reaching faster resolutions for children through family reunification, adoption or guardianship arrangements.