



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**  
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## **Rhode Island KIDS COUNT to Host A Family for Every Child Luncheon**

**Providence, RI (April 26, 2018):** Rhode Island KIDS COUNT will convene state and national child welfare leaders at its first *A Family for Every Child Luncheon* on Monday, April 30, 2018 from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. at The Providence Marriott, One Orms Street, Providence, RI.

Featured speakers will include Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT; Dr. Jeremy Kohomban, President and CEO of The Children’s Village, New York; and Dr. Trista Piccola, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Policy Analyst Kara Foley will share an overview of data on Rhode Island children and teens in the child welfare system.

The convening will focus on the importance of caring for children and youth in families, rather than in group and residential facilities — with foster families receiving the supports they need to be successful.

“We know that children and teenagers do best in families. Rhode Island is making progress in placing more children with families rather than group facilities, but together we can do more,” said Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. “Foster families need ongoing support, including necessary, tailored, community-based services to help children in their care succeed.”

### **The effect of out-of-home placements**

The uncertainty of multiple, prolonged, or unstable out-of-home placements can negatively affect children’s emotional well-being, which has an impact on behavior, academic achievement, and the formation of secure relationships.

Rhode Island children in out-of-home care often experience multiple placements, lose contact with family members, and may have overlooked educational, physical, and mental health needs. Children in out-of-home care also suffer more frequent and more serious medical, developmental, and mental health problems than their peers.

In recent years, the Department of Children, Youth and Families has made progress in shifting from congregate care to foster family care. The number of children in

congregate care in Rhode Island decreased from 449 on December 31, 2014 to 293 on December 31, 2017, and the number of children in relative and non-relative foster family homes increased from 1,273 (61%) to 1,558 (72%) during the same period.

Dr. Jeremy Kohomban, President and CEO of The Children's Village, New York will give a keynote address entitled, *Reflections: "If These Were My Children."* He will share the history of Children's Village, which was one of the oldest and largest providers of congregate care and residential treatment in the U.S. and will then discuss why the Trustees and he led The Children's Village to refocus its mission to keeping children and families together whenever possible. "We know that residential care is not an effective long-term approach for supporting children and families. Children belong in families, and families need support to provide care for children in crisis. States and providers can and must provide leadership to shift their models away from group care and toward family and community-based supports for all children," said Dr. Kohomban.

Dr. Trista Piccola, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, will provide an update on the *DCYF Operational Plan: "Pivot to Prevention."* She will discuss how DCYF is working to place a greater emphasis on prevention as well as ongoing work to transition children out of congregate care and into the care of foster families.

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*Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children's policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, safety, education and development of Rhode Island children.*