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PRESS RELEASE

DCFS REMAINS COMMITTED TO SAFE FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Feb. 5, 2010, LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) will continue to prioritize children's safety first and remains strongly committed to returning children to their families whenever it is safe and in the best interest of the children, according to Trish Ploehn, director of DCFS.

"Our highest priority is to ensure that families are supported with adequate resources to care for their own children," Ploehn said. "We remain committed to the direction we have been taking to avoid the trauma of removal whenever safely possible and continue to focus on keeping families together. It is, and always will be, the way we serve our children and families."

Contrary to a story in today's *Los Angeles Times*, DCFS has not "suspended a long-standing effort to reduce the number of children in foster homes." In fact, the department continues to remain steadfast in its commitment to reducing the number of children in foster care and to increasing the number of family reunifications.

FACTS:

- DCFS remains committed to family reunification whenever it is safe for the children. In fact, the number of children in foster care has continued to decrease. As of January 2010 there were 15,680 children in temporary foster care compared to 15,997 in November 2009.
- DCFS has implemented numerous safety measures to ensure thorough investigations and assessments that augment, not replace, our efforts for safe family reunifications.
- Reassigning current staff to the investigative unit will be one way to move towards the goal of decreasing caseloads to 18 or fewer children to help bolster child safety. This strategy will not incur any cost.

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