



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

by

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Minister of Youth, Social Development and Seniors

DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES **BUILDING CAPACITY FOR PARENTING**

Friday, 12th June 2026

Mr. Speaker, I rise today before this Honourable House to provide an update on the Department of Child and Family Services' efforts to strengthen parenting capacity within our community through parent coaching certification and parenting skills development initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, the Department's Mirrors Programme, has placed a strategic focus on parenting skills and co-regulation skill building for the current year. These efforts are designed to support both Department of Child and Family Services clients and the broader community through a series of prevention-focused parenting workshops and a Parent Coaching Certification Programme. This certification programme will equip identified staff members with specialized parent coaching credentials in 2027, enhancing our capacity to support families across the prevention and intervention

continuum. The Parent Coaching Certification training will commence in August 2026 and conclude in April 2027.

Mr. Speaker, this work is informed by data. Findings from the Department's Family Strengths and Needs Assessment indicate that parenting skills and coping and mental health skills continue to represent the greatest areas of need among families receiving services. Last year, parenting skills emerged as one of the highest identified needs among families served by the Department. This trend continued into the first quarter of this year, with seventy-two percent (72%) of the fifty-seven (57) households assessed demonstrating a need for parenting skill development. Coping skills and mental health needs ranked second, with seventy percent (70%) of households identifying challenges in these areas.

Mr. Speaker, in response to these findings, the Department through its Mirrors Programme will implement a comprehensive 28-week Parent Coaching Certification Programme. Delivered through prevention services, this initiative will strengthen community-based support while also enhancing intervention services provided to Department clients. The programme will develop a cadre of certified parent coaches equipped with evidence-informed strategies to support parents in building stronger relationships, improving communication, and fostering healthy child development.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the Parent Coaching Certification Programme, the Mirrors Programme will partner with the Youth Mental Health Plan and Bermuda's schools to expand access to parenting support throughout the community. Through these partnerships, the Keys of Excellent Parenting workshops will be delivered within school communities and sporting clubs, creating greater opportunities for parents and caregivers to strengthen their parenting skills, build healthy family relationships, and develop practical strategies that support the social and emotional well-being of children and young people. By bringing these workshops directly into community settings where families naturally gather, we aim to reduce barriers to participation, increase accessibility, and strengthen the network of support available to Bermuda's parents and caregivers. The Keys of Excellent Parenting workshop series will run from September 2026 through June 2027, providing ongoing opportunities for engagement and learning throughout the academic year.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the year, the Mirrors Programme will measure and evaluate the impact of these initiatives quarterly to ensure that they are meeting the needs of families and contributing to positive outcomes for children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, the Department's Family Preservation Team is also strengthening its specialized response to families affected by abuse and neglect through targeted professional development. Identified staff members have received training in the Nurturing Parenting Programme, an evidence-based approach designed specifically for families involved in child abuse and neglect cases. This training will enhance the Department's capacity to support parents and caregivers in developing healthy parenting practices, strengthening attachment and family relationships, improving self-regulation, and reducing risk factors associated with maltreatment. This specialized training complements the broader parenting capacity-building strategy by ensuring that staff are equipped to respond effectively to the varying levels of need presented by families across both prevention and intervention services.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the parents who have reached out for support. Asking for help is not always easy; however, these parents have demonstrated courage and commitment by recognizing the importance of building a network of support for the growth, development, and well-being of their children. We thank them for placing their trust in the services and community supports available to them.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Department of Child and Family Services, and the Ministry, I extend sincere thanks to our community partners and members of the public for their ongoing engagement and commitment to safeguarding Bermuda's children and youth. As the saying goes, it takes a community to raise a child. Together, we can continue building stronger families and brighter futures for Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.