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Governor Christie Continues to Strengthen Critical Programs to Support Children and Families in Need

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Fiscal Year 2104 Budget Bolsters Family-Support Programs

Trenton, NJ – Building upon the Administration's commitment to strengthen services provided to the state's most vulnerable citizens, Governor Chris Christie and Department of Children and Families (DCF) Commissioner Dr. Allison Blake today toured the Arc of Middlesex County to get a first-hand look at the agency's family support services, including its after-school program. Last year, Governor Christie enacted commonsense changes to strengthen how social services are provided by state government, focusing on the needs of the individual.

"Last year, we began a commonsense reorganization of government around a single principle, making it easier to serve the needs of individuals. By making these changes, we have been successful in broadening the scope and reach of services in a proactive way to serve even more families, women, and children with the care they need," said Governor Christie. "Afterschool programs like the one here at Arc of Middlesex County, are vital to providing parents and caregivers the peace of mind that their children are safe, as well as the assurance that they are in an environment conducive to learning, socialization and recreation, all fundamental to their personal growth. That's why this Administration has continued its commitment for initiatives like Family Support Services so that county-based organizations can provide direct services and assistance to meet the needs of families of children with emotional and behavioral challenges as well as those with developmental and intellectual disabilities."

Governor Christie continued his commitment to provide resources to critical programs including Family Support Services for individuals up to age 21, which transitioned from the Department of Human Services to the Department of Children and Families. The funding level for this program in Governor Christie's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget is \$26.2 million.

Arc of Middlesex County provides a Family Support Program to families with a family member who has a developmental disability living at home. The program offers caregivers access to an array of services that include weekend and afterschool respite services, advocacy, outreach and recreation such as summer camp, assistive technology devices, home and vehicle modifications.

"Being there for those family members and individual caregivers that, day in and day out, give of themselves to ensure the safety and well-being of their loved ones is critical," said DCF Commissioner Dr. Blake. "Our partnership with the Arc of Middlesex reaffirms our commitment toward creating a child and family-centered Department," she added.

Governor Christie's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget reflects his ongoing commitment to provide critical programs and services for women, children and families, including:

Giving Families the Tools to Succeed through Family Success Centers. These community-based organizations provide services ranging from basic needs like day care and parenting classes to more complex needs such as accessing mental health support, domestic violence prevention and substance abuse services for people in their own communities. Governor Christie protected funding at **\$9.7 million** in State funds along with **\$2.5 million** in federal funds. The number of Family Success Centers in New Jersey will increase from 42 in 2012 to **50** this year.

Ensuring Children Receive Access to Health Care by coordinating access to health care for children in out-of-home placements through Child Health Units, co-located in each of the local offices of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency. The Child Health Unit program receives \$15.8 million in State funding with total funding for the program at \$31.5 million, split equally between State and federal funds.

Providing Care for Adolescent Treatment Services by expanding the current children's system of care to provide an integrated approach to services for adolescents with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders. The State has aligned all mental health and substance abuse services for adults under the Department of Human Services and for children under the Department of Children and Families.

Providing Young People with Needed Help through the NJ 2NDFLOOR Youth Helpline, a statewide, 24-hour interactive telephone line for youth and young adults (ages 10-24). The helpline, staffed by counseling professionals and specially trained volunteers, promotes healthy youth development by providing immediate interactive, respectful professional helpline services with linkage to information and services that address the social and health needs of young people.

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Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
Kevin Roberts
609-777-2535



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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000