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DHS Ready for School Year, Resources Available.



DHS has resources available for needy families as they gear up for the new school year.

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The Department of Human Services is ready and willing to assist needy families this school year, and it's more than just new backpacks or pencils, but that's part of it.

"There's a new \$79 clothing allowance additional on top of the normal allowance families get," Director of DHS Ismael Ahmed said.

They're calling it Helping Families 101, and they're laying out all the resources available, from parenting advice, to early childhood development tools, to teen domestic violence awareness. □

"It's a very pervasive issue," Sarah Heuser of the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board said. "Obviously it affects learning. You can't concentrate in school if you are dealing with serious emotional issues."

Ahmed said the need is certainly great. 2.5 million Michigan families use some type of service from the department, 50,000 more families apply each month.

"About one-third of children in the state today are living in poverty, so there are families out there that aren't able to prepare the kids for school and provide that daily support," he said.

That's where DHS comes in.

Single mom of five Devon Lynn is thankful for the assistance, especially the tutoring help her kids receive at Cristo Rey Community Center.

"When you need help, it's ok to get that help," Lynn said.

The Department is hoping every family who needs it will take advantage of the help provided, so all they have to worry about this school year is learning.

"If we focus on anything, we need to focus on our children," Ahmed said.

The department is also making an estimated \$6.6 million investment in a child abuse and neglect prevention pilot

program in five urban communities. When and where should be announced soon.

For more information on Helping Families 101, go to:

www.michigan.gov/helpingfamilies101

Find this article at:

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