

Fiscal Year 2022  
Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids:  
DCF Line Item #4800-0200

**FY 2022 Funding Request: \$1.5 Million**

About Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids (MHAP for Kids)

MHAP for Kids, a program offered through the Department of Children and Families’ Family Resource Centers (FRCs), ensures that children with high risk factors receive mental health services. MHAP for Kids improves the mental health of youth with unmet mental health needs by **providing these children with an attorney trained in removing barriers to treatment and diverting children from the juvenile justice system**. MHAP for Kids’ staff attorneys are based out of **10 DCF FRCs serving children statewide and providing a statewide intake line**.

A two-year independent study of MHAP for Kids by the Boston University School of Public Health found that the program significantly improves the mental health of at-risk children and their families, while significantly reducing truancy, psychiatric hospitalizations and emergency department visits. During the COVID-19 pandemic, MHAP for Kids has continued to serve children with the greatest need:

- 66% live in a city/town in the top 30 for highest COVID-19 rates
- 66% identify as a person of color
- 97% identified with mental health diagnosis at the time of MHAP for Kids intake

Why funding is needed

Approximately 64% of MHAP for Kids’ funding is state appropriation. MHAP for Kids is supported through an earmark of \$950,000; the remaining funds are raised by Health Law Advocates. The resources provided through the state budget are vital to allowing MHAP for Kids to serve families in districts with fewer resources and focus on meeting critical mental health needs.

Updates

FY21 GAA	FY22 Ask	FY22 Governor	FY22 House	FY22 Senate	Conference
\$17.45M for FRCs; \$950K MHAP	\$950K MHAP	\$16M for FRCs; No earmark	\$16M for FRCs; No earmark	\$23M for FRCs; \$1.5M MHAP	\$25M for FRCs; \$1.5M MHAP