

DCY On The Move

Director Wente Explains Three Key Goals at Membership Meeting



On March 14, DCY Director Kara Wente addressed the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association (OJFSDA) general membership meeting. She highlighted DCY's three key goals and budget priorities around:

- Reducing infant mortality
- Improving kindergarten readiness
- Lowering the number of children entering foster care

OJFSDA represents all 88 county Job and Family Services Directors and plays a vital role in advocating for solutions that strengthen Ohio families. Together, we're working to make Ohio the best place to start and raise a family!

Assistant Director Marks Child Abuse Prevention Month in Scioto County

DCY Assistant Director Jeff Van Deusen recently visited Scioto County Job and Family Services, where he spoke at their child abuse prevention event and an agency staff meeting alongside various community partners and county commissioners.

He shared words of encouragement with staff, emphasizing to the agency and community partners that prevention is a shared responsibility. "It takes all community members working together to protect children," he said. The visit concluded with a Pinwheels for Prevention display outside the agency and at the courthouse, symbolizing our collective commitment to child abuse prevention.

Pictured: Scioto County JFS Director, Tammy Moore and DCY Assistant Director Jeff Van Deusen



Director Says, There is "More Work to Do" to Reduce Infant Mortality



Director Wente participated in a panel discussion in March about what local groups and the state of Ohio are doing to reduce infant mortality. She told the crowd at the State House Atrium, "Our preliminary data for 2024 shows our lowest infant mortality rate statewide in 20 years. But we still have more work to do—by making sure every mother and baby in Ohio has access to the right care, at the right time, in a way that truly makes a difference."

The panel was moderated by CelebrateOne Executive Director Danielle Tong and included Angela Newman-White from First Year Cleveland.

Director Delivers Remarks at First-Ever Black Maternal Health Caucus Summit

Director Wente was invited by the Black Maternal Health Caucus to speak as its Inaugural Summit on April 15. She told attendees that in order to listen to communities, families, and young people, DCY has held 15 family listening sessions with more than 350 youth, parents, and caregivers in attendance. She also noted that DCY partnered with the BUILD Initiative and the Infant Mortality Task Force to hold 14 community conversations about improving Black maternal and infant health outcomes, connecting with 82 families.



**Department of
Children & Youth**

Director has 'Fireside Chat' with Ohio Chamber of Commerce

Rick Carfagna with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce sat down with Director Wente at the 2025 Ohio Child Care Policy Summit to discuss how today's quality early learning environments directly impact the workforce of tomorrow. Director Wente said, "Child care isn't just a family issue. It's a business issue, an economic issue, and a workforce development issue."



Governor and Director Honored in Allen County

Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio DCY Director Kara Wente were honored with Friend of Children Awards at the Allen County 2025 Community for Kids Luncheon, recognizing their unwavering commitment to improving the lives of Ohio's children.

Hosted by Allen County Children Services, this event brought together local and state leaders to highlight those making a profound impact on the well-being of vulnerable children and families.

This recognition underscores the power of collaboration, policy leadership, and community-driven solutions in ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive. Thank you to all who work tirelessly to protect and uplift Ohio's youth.

Regulatory Compliance Team Attends Child Care Conferences

In March and April, DCY team members from Regulatory Compliance were invited to participate in three child care conferences hosted by the Corporation for Appalachian Development (COAD) Child Care Resource Network. These conferences bring together child care providers for professional development workshops, guest speaker presentations, and valuable networking opportunities. Thank you to all the staff who participated in these events, sharing their expertise and providing support to those working with Ohio's children!

Pictured: left to right, from COAD SDA 10 in Marietta, Katie Moerch, Stephanie Walters, Susanne Zimmerer, Crystal Luse, and DCY Chief Government and External Affairs Officer Joel Potts.



Technology Talk

Last month DCY Chief Information Officer Brittaney Carter and Family Support Operations Bureau Chief Liz Holzworth presented at a leadership conference hosted by Carahsoft. They, along with other colleagues discussed the impact technologies like Salesforce for Government have on our mission to DO WHAT'S RIGHT FOR KIDS.

DCY Chief Information Officer Brittaney Carter



**Department of
Children & Youth**

Pilot Program Topic at Breakfast

As part of Child Abuse Prevention Month, Children and Young Adult Supports Bureau Chief Dorothy Striker gave a presentation April 9 at the Fairfield County Children Services Breakfast. She spoke about the Treatment Foster Home (TFH) pilot and Fairfield County's work with foster youth.

Young Adult Supports Bureau Chief Dorothy Striker



Jackson County Honors DCY



Assistant Director Jeff Van Deusen joined Jackson County's 2025 United for Kids – Building Hope for Tomorrow Symposium to share how we're working together to support youth and families across Ohio and urged community partners to play a role in helping to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Liz Holzworth, from DCY shared an exciting update on TEAM Ohio and the momentum building across the state and, in a special surprise, DCY was honored with the Innovation and Advocacy Award—a powerful reminder that collaboration does create change.

Thank you, Jackson County, for this recognition and for your dedication to Ohio's children.

Cuyahoga County Hosts Walk and Press Conference to Mark Child Abuse Prevention Month

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Cuyahoga County Department of Child and Family Services hosted its annual Child Abuse Prevention Walk on April 23 outside the Cuyahoga County Administration Building in downtown Cleveland.

The event featured a press conference with powerful messages from local leaders and child advocates, including:

- ◆ Chris Ronayne, Cuyahoga County Executive
- ◆ Jacqueline Fletcher, Director, DCFS
- ◆ Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director, Canopy Child Advocacy Center
- ◆ Maryum Ali, Program Manager, Family Success Network Cuyahoga

Maryum Ali spoke about the critical role of prevention services in ensuring the safety and well-being of children in Cuyahoga County. She highlighted the impact of the Family Success Network, supported by the Ohio Children's Trust Fund, which connects families with the tools and resources they need to thrive.

Together, we're building safer communities and stronger families.



**Department of
Children & Youth**