



Division of Children and Family Services

Connecting our plans, policy, practice, and people

Words of Support From Our Interim Director, Pat Page

I want to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday and a wonderful 2007. I have served as Interim Director for nearly two months now. It is a humbling experience. I think it is a lot like being a Family Service Worker – never enough of you to go around and never enough time to get it all done! To accomplish our priorities of child protection, permanency, and well-being, I adopted the following priorities for the interim period:

- Stabilization of the work force. Front line staff and supervisors are what we are all about. They are HOW we deliver services to children and their families. We must continue to hire quality staff and keep them – because they love what they are doing. We must give them the opportunity to succeed. We need to ask them “What can we do to support you (in helping children and families)?”
- Accountability. We must be accountable to children and families we serve to assess accurately what they need to address their problems and challenges, and make sure they can get access to those services. But that is not the only accountability that needs to exist. We as a Division need to be accountable to the workers and supervisors to assure that they have the ability to succeed. And ultimately we must be accountable to the citizens of Arkansas. And we must treat the citizens, the clients and each other with respect and kindness.
- Best practice. We want our organization to be the best it can be so it can deliver the best services to Arkansas’ children and families. We have to stay on top of current best practices and always be thinking about how we can improve what we do. We all have ideas – and we need to share them and have a learning environment where people feel free to do so. We always need to be open to thinking about new possibilities.

I have been serving on the Legislative Task Force on Abused and Neglected Children chaired by Senators Malone and Madison. This group has been very supportive of what we do. We had a speaker a few months ago who is a child abuse prosecutor and educator from another state. I wanted to share a quote from him with you.

“For our country, and for our children, we too must give our full measure in the hope that others just as dedicated will come after us and complete what we begin. Someday, somewhere, somebody will write the history of our nation’s victory over child abuse. When the history is written, may it be recorded that the beginning of the end occurred in the early part of the 21st century when thousands of child protection professionals from every region of the country joined forces to lead the charge. If we act now and for the rest of our lives as a testament to the invisible attributes of faith, hope and love, a later generation may one day see with their eyes what our hearts tell us is our nation’s destiny.” Victor Vieth, 2004

Thanks to each of you for what you do!

Pat Page

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain.

If I can ease one life the aching, or cool one pain, or help one fainting robin into his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

Emily Dickinson

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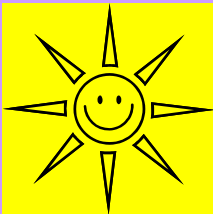
Resources

Mission Statement

I find the great thing in
this world
is not so much
where we stand
as what direction
we are moving.



The essence of
leadership is vision.



Reach high
For stars lie hidden in you
soul
Dream deep
for every dream precedes
the goal



Council on Accreditation

The Division of Children and Family Services received accreditation from the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services (COA) in August 2004. We will begin the re-accreditation process in 2007. DCFS was accredited under COA's 7th Edition Standards for Public Agencies. The 8th Edition Standards will apply to our re-accreditation and offers a new strategy for strengthening, measuring, and validating an organization's effectiveness. The new standards use concise, clear, and non-regulatory language. COA refers to this new strategy as "Contextual Accreditation". The new standards set forth a range of appropriate best practices and retain COA's unwavering commitment to client rights and essential life and safety practices. COA will make on-site visits to determine DCFS' continuous compliance with COA's standards of best practice. The COA Standards can be accessed at www.COAstandards.org.

Safety Tips For The Holidays

1. Supervise your child when in a public facility. Always accompany your child to the restroom. Make certain children know to stay with you at all times while shopping and always check first with you or the other person in charge before they go anywhere.
2. Teach children to look for people who can be sources of help within the store if they become separated from you while shopping. For example, a uniformed law-enforcement or security officer, store salesperson with a nametag, person with a nametag working at the information booth, or a mother with children can be safe helpers. Teach them not to leave the area and they should never leave the mall or store and go to the parking lot to look for their car.
3. Make visits to the mall opportunities for your children to practice these "safe shopping" skills. Teach them how to use a public telephone; locate adult sources of help within the mall/store, for older children, go to the restroom with a friend.
4. Parents or guardians should not leave children alone at public facilities such as video arcades, movie theaters, or playgrounds as a convenient babysitter while they are holiday shopping. Never leave children in a toy or specialty store expecting store personnel to supervise and care for your children. They are trained in this role, and it is not a function of their employment.
5. If you allow your older children to go to the mall or other activities without you, they need to take a friend. It's more fun and much safer. Older children should check in with you on a regular basis while they are out. Make certain a clear plan is in place to pick them up including where, what time, and what to do in case of a change in plans.
6. Nothing takes the place of your supervision when you are in a public place with your children. If you are going holiday shopping and feel that you will be distracted, make other arrangements for the care of your children. It's easy for you and your children to get distracted with all the sights, sounds and crowds of holiday shopping so make certain they stay with you at all times.

Child and Adolescent Service System Program

The children’s public mental health system in Arkansas uses the CASSP model of an integrated system of care. Act 964 of 1991 established CASSP with revisions in the law made in 2001 and 2005. The purpose for creating this entity included the need for a structure for coordinated policy development and comprehensive planning in regard to children’s mental health services in Arkansas. The intention of the law is to build on existing resources as well as design and implement a coordinated service system which is child and family centered and community-based. CASSP is based on values for an ideal system of care for mental health for children with serious emotional disturbance and families.

The CASSP Coordinating Council has been meeting since July 1991. It is comprised of 48 positions appointed by the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Commissioner of the Department of Education. The members represent state agencies, consumers and family members, advocacy groups, mental health providers (both public and private), and other stakeholders in children’s mental health. This group of stakeholders in the children’s mental health system is replicated in each Community Health Center catchment area through Regional Planning Teams. In addition, CASSP Service Teams, which include the child and his/her family, are available to assess and develop an interagency plan called a MAPS to meet the mental health needs of individual children, adolescents, and their families.

Referrals for CASSP must come through the local mental health center. Any child-serving agency/organization or parent/guardian of a child with serious emotional disturbances can make a referral. The CASSP Coordinator in each community mental health center catchment area will make sure the child is assessed using previous assessments and available information provided by the referral source. If the child meets the criteria for CASSP, a multi-agency service team will hold a staffing which must be attended by the parent/guardian, and the child if appropriate.

Belief-Based Performance Management

Belief-Based Performance Management is an approach to leading an agency. It drives changes in policy, practice and organizational structure that lead to outcomes that are based on the values and beliefs of the organization. Beliefs clarify the right outcomes and are a good place to start. Beliefs form the foundation for understanding good performance.

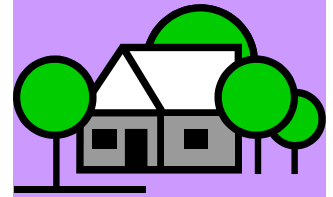
Our General Beliefs and Specific Beliefs

- Every Child Matters
- People Need Family
- Strong Communities Build Strong Families
- Our Job Is To Empower People To Help Themselves

We Have a Responsibility to Provide Services That Work

- Family-centered services are most effective.
- Coordinated, consistent services promote better outcomes.
- Individuals and families should have access to appropriate resources.
- Early and appropriate intervention promotes successful outcomes.
- Continuous measurement of outcomes and performance improves practice.
- Substance abuse undermines services and cannot be ignored.

The DHHS Beliefs have been revised and will be presented in the next issue.



Although the world is full of suffering, it is full of the overcoming of it



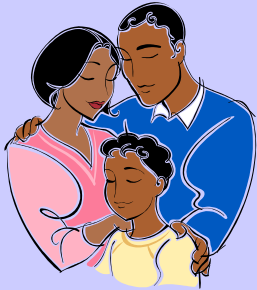
Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things.



Make of yourself a Light



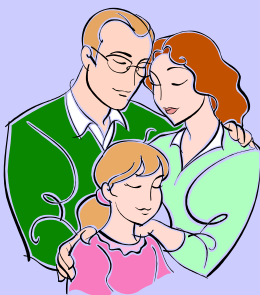
**People
Need Family**



**Those Who Have Hope
Have Everything**



**It is only with the
heart
that one can see
rightly**



**Every Child
Matters**

Adoption Services Coalitions

White County Adoption Coalition - The White County Adoption Coalition held “Round Up Hope”, an event for waiting children and prospective adoptive parents to meet and have fun! The event started with several DCFS staff and coalition members on stage performing the “Chicken Dance”. The kids got involved and loved it. They had a magician, a petting zoo, horses to ride, Mark Martin’s race car, as well as face painting, pumpkin decorating, and many other things for the kids and the prospective adoptive parents to do. Each child received a t-shirt, cowboy hat, a real sheriff’s badge, and a disposable camera to capture their memories of the day. Local businesses donated hot dogs, hamburgers, and pizza, as well as cotton candy, snow cones, and Yarnells’s ice cream. Local fire and law enforcement departments had exhibits. The day was a complete success! Kudos to Ainslee Brown and the whole White County Adoption Coalition!!!

Garland County Adoption Coalition – The Garland County Coalition celebrated Adoption Day on November 18th at the Mid-America Science Museum. The program included speakers such as foster parents, a 14 year old girl and her brother talking about how glad they are adopted, Judge Cook, and others. The day had a circus theme complete with clowns, popcorn and peanuts, and cake. Around 200 people attended and were given information about foster parenting and adopting. Channel 4 attended, interviewed several people and aired a story regarding the event.

West Memphis Adoption Coalition - In collaboration with the Delta Christian Association and First Baptist Church, the Coalition held an Adoption Hoedown at the church in Marion. The purpose of the event was in celebration of Adoption Awareness Month. Both foster and adoptive families and children attended the event. Approximately 60 children and families were in attendance. A DJ played country western music. Adopted children and families sang and danced the day away. An Adoptive Parent spoke regarding her experience in adoption. Delta Christian Association purchased cowboy hats, bandanas, and crafts for the children. The Coalition purchased hotdogs, chili, nachos, drinks and other snacks for the event.

The Adoption Coalitions are a result of a federal grant DCFS received in 2003. The members of the Coalitions are local people who focus their efforts on finding permanent homes for children waiting to be adopted. Alicen Bennett can provide coalition information at 501-682-8537.

“A Home for the Holidays”

Each December, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and the Children’s Action Network present **A Home for the Holidays** on television. This CBS special brings together all-star talent to raise awareness for foster care adoption. This heartwarming holiday special has generated calls from viewers after hearing true stories of families who adopted from foster care and of waiting children. Watch this special and share, through the eyes of a child, the joy of having a family. **Friday, December 22, 7:00 pm (CST)**

Holiday Festivities Benefit Foster Children

On November 15th, a Gingerbread Christmas Tree appeared in the lobby of Donaghey Plaza South. The tree was decorated with cut-outs of gingerbread girls and boys with the first names and gift wishes of foster children. Folks searched the tree for that special girl or boy or two or three to sponsor. On December 4th and 5th, Santa's helpers were busy at work organizing the toys and gifts donated through the Gingerbread Tree. Over 300 children were sponsored through the Gingerbread Tree. DCFS field staff were very helpful in picking up the gifts for the children.

On December 1st, the Holiday Bazaar was held and featured a Silent Auction, Arts and Crafts, Hot Dogs, Chili, and a Bake Sale. Everyone found great buys and good food. Proceeds were used to purchase gifts for our foster children. This event has been sponsored by DCFS Central Office staff for several years.

On December 14th, Santa made a special visit to the DHHS offices in downtown Little Rock to deliver gifts for foster children. Rudolph and his reindeer friends were resting up for their big night on the 24th so Santa arrived riding an antique fire truck. The Santa parade included several big fire trucks and shiny red, green, silver, and gold antique cars. Flashing red lights from emergency vehicles brightened Santa's trip to deliver donated toys. The Little Rock Fire Department, Wal-Mart, and the Little Rock Police Department were instrumental in this effort to gather toys from the public and the parade.

Stuff A Sleigh, Inc. was successful again this year. Stuff a Sleigh, Inc., was created in 2002 when a need arose to help foster children experience a merry Christmas. Today's THV This Morning and Alice 107.7 joined the drive to collect toys for Stuff A Sleigh, Inc. THV did live shots from Wal-Mart in Benton, Wal-Mart in Cabot, and Wal-Mart in Little Rock. Other drop-spots included Conway, Maumelle, Sherwood, North Little Rock, and Little Rock.



Thanks to all who gave their time and their donations to our foster children this year.

Mississippi County Foster Parent Support Group

Several Mississippi County Foster Parents met with DCFS County Staff to discuss efforts to re-start the Foster Parent Support Group in that county. Group officials were elected and plans were made for future meetings including contacts with other foster parents as potential members and sponsors for refreshments. Meetings will be hosted by foster parents. County Staff will provide assistance with mailing correspondence to foster parents of meeting notices and etc.

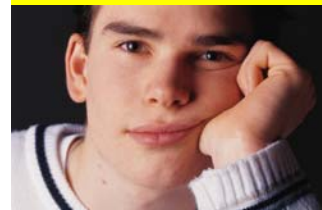
Every Child Matters



Some people see things as they are and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask why not.



Everyone of us gets through the tough times because somebody is there standing in the gap to close it for us.



People Need Family



**Division of Children
and Family Services**

P.O. Box 1437, Slot S 570
Little Rock, AR 72203

**CONNECTIONS**

is produced quarterly
by the DCFS
Legislative Analysis
Research and
Planning Section

Comments and
suggestions can be
directed to
Georganne Lewis,
Editor
Planning Unit
georganne.lewis@
arkansas.gov
(501) 682-8738

Thanks to all who
contributed to this issue
of **Connections**

Suggestions and ideas for
future issues are
welcome.

Resources and References

National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice & Permanency Planning
www.nrcfcppp.org

Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute
www.adoptioninstitute.org

National Adoption Information Clearinghouse
<http://naic.acf.hhs.gov>

Fostering Perspectives
www.fosteringperspectives.org

Arkansas Youth Development Collaboration
www.avdc.arkansas.gov

National Network for Youth in Foster Care
www.fosterclub.com

Center for Effective Parenting
www.parenting-ed.org

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org

DCFS Mission Statement

Our mission is to:

- Protect children.
- Maintain families, if appropriate with the child's health and safety always considered paramount.
- Provide quality services within available resources, which enable families to maximizing their potential and increase their abilities.
- Provide permanency through adoption or other permanent living arrangement for children that cannot be reunited with their family.
- Preserve and enhance human dignity and worth.
- Prevent or reduce the need for services.

**DHHS**