

DCY On The Move

DCY Teams Present at the ACA Ohio Camp Conference



Pictured: Aliceson Downey, Supervisor, Early Care & Education Technical Assistance; Greg Leyland, Quality Assurance Administrator; and Jonni Masters, Early Care & Education Licensing Supervisor

On January 16, 2025, the Early Care & Education teams from Regulatory Compliance and Technical Assistance participated in the 2025 American Camp Association (ACA) Conference located at the Ohio 4-H Center at The Ohio State University. This annual, one-day event for camp professionals to network with peers and offer professional development breakout sessions.

DCY teams staffed the DCY booth throughout the day to answer questions and promote DCY resources. The DCY teams held an educational breakout session on Ohio's Registered and Approved Day Camp Process. Their session provided guidance on the different types of day camps, the application process, including background check requirements, and encouraged camps to become an approved camp that accepts publicly funded child care to support Ohio's families. Nearly 140 professionals from multiple states attended this year's conference.

Director Wente Highlights Ohio's Commitment to Fighting Human Trafficking

On January 29, Director Wente spoke at the 2025 Human Trafficking Prevention Awareness Statehouse Advocacy Day about Ohio's ongoing fight against human trafficking. She emphasized the need for continued support and collaboration to protect vulnerable children, especially those in children's services, from traffickers who gain their trust. With support from Governor DeWine, Ohio has invested \$9 million into this critical work, along with new resources like an Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator and the Human Trafficking Dashboard.



Bold Goals for Ohio's Children: Director Wente Speaks at Best Point Education and Behavioral Health All Staff



At the Best Point Education and Behavioral Health 2024 All Staff Summit, DCY Director Kara Wente shared the department's three bold goals for improving children's outcomes in Ohio. Discussing the department's strategic approach, she highlighted critical initiatives such as prenatal care, evidence-based home visiting, and affordable child care.

Director Wente challenged attendees to consider how their work contributes to ambitious targets which are also key goals for DCY:

- decreasing infant mortality
- enhancing kindergarten readiness
- reducing foster care entry rates

Acknowledging that parenting doesn't come with an instruction manual, Director Wente emphasized DCY's commitment to supporting Ohio families with essential resources, guidance, and community support. Her message was clear: by working together and staying focused on these strategic goals, they can make meaningful differences in children's lives.



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Community Tour: DCY Executives Connect with Local Programs that Serve Families

Director Wente, Assistant Director Jeff VanDeusen, and Chief Government and External Affairs Officer Joel Potts took an insightful tour of several organizations to deepen their understanding of the programs that serve families in local communities. Their visits aim to build stronger connections with vital resources for families and children, gaining firsthand insight into the work being done on the ground. Here's a look at some of the key stops on her tour:

Providence House - Crisis Nursery and Family Resilience Center

The DCY team kicked off their tour with a visit to Providence House's East Campus, Ohio's first and one of the nation's longest-operating, crisis nurseries. During the visit, they learned more about their emergency shelter services for children, from newborns to 12-year-olds, who are in crisis situations. Providence House also supports families through resources designed to help them stay together, a mission that aligns closely with DCY's focus on family resilience. This visit gave the DCY team the opportunity to better understand the important role Providence House plays in ensuring children are safe and supported during times of crisis.

Child Guidance & Family Solutions (CGFS)

Next, the team visited Child Guidance & Family Solutions, a behavioral health agency that serves children, teens, adults, and families in Northeast Ohio. DCY participated in a session that included an in-depth look into the agency's history, mission, and impact on the local community. With a focus on mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, trauma, and crisis intervention, CGFS plays a crucial role in addressing the emotional and psychological needs of families. The discussions with CGFS leadership also covered opportunities and challenges in their work, along with an update on DCY's mission and priorities. This visit provided a comprehensive understanding of the essential mental health services that families rely on in that area.

Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC)

The final stop of the day took the DCY team to the Early Childhood Resource Center, a key resource for early childhood professionals in Stark County. Established in 2000 with funding from the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton, ECRC offers training, mentoring, and technical assistance to those working in early childhood education and care. Director Wente engaged in an open discussion about ECRC's mission to enhance the quality of early education and ensure children are receiving the best start in life. This visit highlighted the importance of supporting early childhood professionals to create a lasting impact on the community's youngest learners.

Through these visits, our executive team members gained a deeper appreciation for the hard work and dedication of local staff who are critical in supporting families. DCY's efforts to engage directly with these organizations ensure that DCY remains closely connected with communities across Ohio and continuously supports initiatives that benefit families in crisis and those working to provide them with the best care and services available.



Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC)



Providence House



Child Guidance & Family Solutions



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