

# Arizona Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment

Annual Report



# 2020



The Governor's Office  
of Youth, Faith  
and Family



Council on Child  
Safety and  
Family Empowerment

[goyff.AZ.gov/csfe](http://goyff.AZ.gov/csfe)



DOUGLAS A. DUCEY  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ARIZONA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

MARIA CRISTINA FUENTES  
DIRECTOR

June 30, 2020

Governor Doug A. Ducey  
State Capitol Executive Tower  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor,

It has been my pleasure to serve as chair of the Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment. I would like to acknowledge the work of this Council, its members, diverse subcommittees and work groups. Their expertise and passion to serve and support vulnerable communities across Arizona has made this work possible.

During this last year, the Council received presentations highlighting adoption and foster care initiatives throughout the State. Through these efforts, partners statewide are working to ensure all Arizona children find safe, permanent and loving homes. The Council continues to focus efforts on amplifying available resources and organizations dedicated to supporting our most vulnerable children and families. The Council remains focused on learning and implementing strategies to prevent ACEs in our communities by assuring safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments. Working together, we can help every child in Arizona thrive.

In February 2020, the purview of the Council was expanded through the enactment of Executive Order 2020-05, which created the Children's Justice State Task Force. This taskforce assists in the development of the State's Three-Year Assessment and also makes recommendations for the implementation of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act/Children's Justice Act. Through the Task Force, Council members can expand their support for victims of child abuse and neglect, particularly victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim.

It is my hope that our continued efforts and collaborative partnerships concerning foster care and adoption, as well as ACEs and trauma informed care, will improve and better serve our most vulnerable youth and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela Ducey".

Angela Ducey Chair  
Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment

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## **COUNCIL PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE**

Governor Doug Ducey established the Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment (CSFE) on July 13, 2015, through Executive Order 2015-08. The Council is administered by the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family (GOYFF) and was established on the premise that strong families and youth are the future of Arizona and are of vital importance to our communities and economy. To facilitate this vision, the Council works to align, leverage and coordinate faith-based and community resources to solve challenges faced by our state's vulnerable children and families.

Government plays an important role in providing supportive benefits, goods, and services, but that role is limited. This is why the Council works with both the private and public sectors to serve our communities. Through its work, the Council has broadened the network of support and services for Arizona's most vulnerable children and families by responding to community challenges and providing opportunities for development and growth.

On February 11, 2020, Governor Ducey signed Executive Order 2020-05, which supersedes Executive Order 2015-08. This Executive Order created the Children's Justice State Task Force under the purview of the Child Safety and Family Empowerment Council. The Children's Justice Task Force assists in the development of the State's Three-Year Assessment and also makes recommendations for the implementation of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act/Children's Justice Act (CJA). The Task Force includes representation from sectors such as law enforcement, the judicial system, child advocates and child protection services to name a few.

Members of the Child Safety and Family Empowerment Council meet five times throughout the year. Council members also have the opportunity to serve on four various workgroups in addition to the Children's Justice State Taskforce. These groups meet regularly to address community needs and systemic challenges with the purpose of identifying best practices and providing evidence-based solutions.

### **CHILDREN'S JUSTICE TASK FORCE**

The Children's Justice Task Force assists in the development of the State's Three-Year Assessment and also makes recommendations for the implementation of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act / Children's Justice Act (CJA).

### **OUTREACH**

Connects with Arizona's faith-based communities to answer the question, "How can we serve?"

### **PREVENTION**

Seeks to address the underlying issues that contribute to a child being removed from a home and placed into foster care.

### **SUPPORT**

Identifies and develops strategic training for the communities and adults that interact with children in the foster care system.

## COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

In accordance with Executive Order 2020-05, the Council is composed of individuals appointed by the Governor who serve at his pleasure without compensation. The following members currently serve on CSFE:

**Angela Ducey, Chair**  
First Lady of Arizona

**Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**  
Adoption Attorney

**Andrea Stuart**  
Arizona Baptist Children's Services

**Berisha Black**  
Arizona Foster Care Initiatives

**Brad Snyder**  
Arizona ACEs Consortium

**Colleen McNally**  
Presiding Juvenile Court Judge, Retired

**Darlene Newsome**  
UMOM New Day Centers

**James Molina**  
Step Up Arizona

**Janet Garcia**  
Casey Family Programs

**Jay Cory**  
Phoenix Rescue Mission

**Jeff Taylor**  
Salvation Army Advisory Board

**Kate Brophy-McGee**  
State Senator

**Katie O'Dell**  
AZ 1.27

**Leslie Reprogle**  
Agape Adoption Agency of Arizona

**Lorrie Henderson**  
Jewish Family Service

**Mark Upton**  
Christian Family Care

**Michael Faust**  
Department of Child Safety

**Obed Escobar**  
Church Alliance

**Paul Mulligan**  
Catholic Charities

**Richard Yarbough**  
Pilgrim Rest Foundation

**Terry Crist**  
Hillsong Phoenix

**Torrie Taj**  
Child Crisis Arizona

**Vicki Mayo**  
The Touchpoint Solution

**Warren Stuart Jr**  
First Institutional Baptist Church

**Zora Manjencich**  
Attorney General's Office

## COUNCIL GOALS, 2019/20

CSFE Council is a public-private partnership created to support Arizona's children and families. The Council was created to align, leverage, and coordinate faith-based and community resources to address challenges faced by vulnerable children and families within the child welfare system. The Council also works to provide additional support to strengthen families that are caring for both foster and adopted children.

The Council has focused its efforts on reducing and preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to keep children from entering the foster care system. The Council has heard from issue-area experts on topics related to ACEs, trauma informed care, and the prevention of childhood abuse and neglect. This information has driven the Council's efforts to ensure that ACEs prevention and trauma informed care become the standard for supporting children across Arizona.

### Adverse Childhood Experiences - ACEs

The prosperity and success of our state depends on the healthy development of children. When ACEs occur healthy development is disrupted, leading to a greater risk of negative lifelong health and social consequences.

Research shows that as the number of ACEs rises, risk factors for negative life outcomes increase, making children more susceptible to negative mental, behavioral, and physical health problems, including: opioid abuse, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, suicidal thoughts and criminal behavior. ACEs diminish the likelihood for success in school and the workplace. Children in foster care, and those at risk of entering foster care, are especially vulnerable.

Preventing and reducing ACEs is critical to the success and well-being of Arizona children and we are grateful for Governor Ducey's leadership as we work to raise the standard of care and support services that we provide to Arizona's youth and families to help mitigate the impact of ACEs. Together, we can make Arizona a healthier, safer and stronger state for all.

### Trauma-Informed Care

Arizona is committed to ensuring trauma informed care (TIC) becomes the standard for supporting children and families across the State. Through continued efforts and collaborative partnerships, Arizona is working to improve and better serve our most vulnerable youth and families through a trauma informed lens.

TIC involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of trauma on an individual throughout their lifespan. TIC emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional support for individuals and works to help trauma survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

The members of this Council work diligently within their individual organizations to support services that combat and prevent childhood trauma, neglect and abuse. This Council is composed of policy-makers, advocates, service organizations, various government officials and faith community members who strive to make changes and offer support to Arizona's most vulnerable and for those who care for them by reaching out to the community, listening to their needs and working on developing projects that are responsive to those needs.

## COUNCIL EVENTS, 2019/20

### 6th Annual Statewide ACEs Summit

In December 2019, First Lady Angela Ducey and Director Maria Cristina Fuentes of the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family joined over 400 national, regional and local leaders in Phoenix, AZ for the 6th Annual Arizona ACEs Summit, an event focused on promoting trauma-informed care to best treat those who have experienced ACEs.

The Summit included welcoming remarks from First Lady Angela Ducey, as well as updates from state agencies on their trauma-informed initiatives, the level of engagement community providers can expect from them moving forward, and the support these agencies need from consortium members.

The 2019 Summit provided attendees the opportunity to participate in workshops led by national and state experts who have been instrumental in shaping Arizona's current trauma-informed care practices.

Attendees also had the opportunity to share and discuss how to build upon current successes to continue improving Arizona's response to ACEs and trauma.

Arizona is committed to reducing the number of citizens who experience ACEs by providing the support necessary to create happier and healthier communities statewide. State agencies, including the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family, Arizona's Department of Health Services and the Arizona Department of Child Safety, have partnered to reduce and mitigate the impact of ACEs through trauma-informed care and worked closely together to support the planning of the 7th annual ACEs Summit.

### National Adoption Day

The Maricopa County National Adoption Day (Foundation) Celebration Committee hosted National Adoption Day on Saturday, Nov. 23, 2019. National Adoption Day is a national effort to raise awareness towards all children in foster care waiting for permanent and loving families. Each November, communities across the country celebrate this day, to give thanks for families. Courts in 410 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam open their doors to finalize the adoptions of thousands of children from foster care, and to celebrate all families who adopt. Maricopa County is proud to have been a participant in this event since its inception in 2000. For the last several years, Maricopa County's event has been the largest in the country with more children adopted here than in any other city in the country. Governor Ducey joined families and officials on November 23, 2019 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of National Adoption Day. In 2019, 145 children were adopted into loving homes.

### Faith Community Symposium on Child Well-Being - Helping Arizona's Most Vulnerable

On September 23, 2019, the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family and the Child Safety and Family Empowerment Council brought together over 200 faith leaders to raise awareness about the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Speakers provided an understanding of current law related to neglect and abuse, and created opportunities to learn about how the faith community is working to better serve and support Arizona's children.

### Tour of Amberly's Place

On January 21, 2019, Governor Ducey & Mrs. Ducey participated in a round-table discussion with the leadership of Amberly's Place, followed by a tour to learn more about the services they provide to victims of crime, including: sexual assault, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, elder abuse and human trafficking. Amberly's Place, established in 1997, is the only Crisis Response Family Advocacy Center in Yuma County and the only center in Arizona that offers 24/7 Crisis Response Advocates and center availability.

## COUNCIL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

During the past year, the Council received presentations from issue-area experts on topics related to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma informed care, and the prevention of childhood abuse and neglect. The Council continued to learn and implement strategies to prevent ACEs in our community by assuring safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments. This understanding has helped facilitate the Council's efforts to ensure that trauma informed care and the prevention of ACEs become the standard for supporting children and families across Arizona.

### **Phoenix Children's Hospital ACEs Center**

#### **Dr. Amy Shoptaugh and Dr. Jodi Carter**

The mission of the Phoenix Children's Hospital ACEs Center program is to transform the lives of Arizona children who have experienced adversity or trauma by providing evidence-based integrated and integrative health services. The program aims to: equip children to become resilient; educate pediatric providers in incorporating screening of their patients for ACEs; support caregivers in caring for children who have been exposed to ACEs and trauma; and provide the needed tools and resources to caregivers and the community to help break generational cycles of child abuse, neglect and trauma. Through the ACEs center, professionals partner with caregivers in health, education and family support sectors working together to ensure children exposed to ACEs are identified and receive appropriate services.

### **Paxis Institute Good Behavior Games**

#### **Dr. Dennis Embry**

The PAX Good Behavior Game is a powerful evidence-based practice, consisting of proven instructional and behavioral health strategies used daily by teachers and students in the classroom. This universal preventive approach not only improves classroom behavior and academics, but also provides a lifetime of benefits for every child by improving self-regulation and co-regulation with peers. Children, their families, teachers, and society benefit for decades as result. Since 1999, PAX Good Behavior Game has been used in thousands of classrooms, in 38 states, Canada, Ireland, Estonia, Sweden and Australia. PAX GBG is the official Good Behavior Game used at Johns Hopkins University for ongoing research.

Beginning in February of 2020, in partnership with GOYFF, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), officially launched an initiative with the PAX Good Behavior Game to provide social-emotional professional development training to Arizona teachers. The materials and training are offered to school districts throughout the state and will be paid for using federal opioid prevention funds. Outreach to school districts has begun through Arizona's County School Superintendents and the Arizona Charter School Association.

### **Pima County Juvenile Court Practice**

#### **Ms. Edith Croxen, Chief Counsel of the Pima County Office of Children's Counsel**

Pima County Children's Counsel follows the attributes laid out in the Family Justice Initiative. The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has created the Family Justice Initiative to evaluate and improve the way courts handle domestic relations cases. This focuses primarily on cases involving divorce/dissolution, property distribution and spousal support, and the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities. Ms. Croxen highlighted the differences between Guardian Ad Litem's and Attorneys and how they approach these roles at the Counsel level in an effort to support the health and welfare of the children. Ms. Croxen shared that typically attorneys will meet with the child within 48 hours of the time they have been appointed.

They will also perform a second visit with the child to look at how the child is responding to their environment. Children who are verbal will meet with their attorney more frequently where non-verbal will meet with an MSW who attends all of their meetings in support of the children.

### **National Adoption Day**

#### **Mrs. Kathryn Pidgeon and Mrs. Janet Story**

The Maricopa County National Adoption Day (Foundation) Celebration Committee hosted National Adoption Day on Saturday, Nov. 23, 2019. The goal of this date was to support all adopted children being in their permanent home for the Thanksgiving holiday. Through the 2019 National Adoption Day event, 145 adoptions took place. The first National Adoption Day in Maricopa County was held on Nov. 18, 2000 in Phoenix. That day, 59 children were adopted. Since then, more than 4,000 children have been adopted during the celebration. This event has become the largest in the country with more adoptions being completed than any other city in the nation.

### **Arizona Human Trafficking Collaborative Video**

#### **Arizona Human Trafficking Council**

Mercy Care, a Medicaid managed care organization in Phoenix, in partnership with the Phoenix Police Department, created a video designed to explain the services available to individuals that are trafficked. The video explains that there is now a retention rate of 94% of those staying in treatment for those that have been trafficked, demonstrating to those victims that members of the community care about them and want them to see themselves as having a future outside of the sex industry. This video, “Mercy Care Human Trafficking Video,” can be found on MeryCare’s YouTube Channel.

### **#LoveUp Foundation**

#### **Ms. Kristin Hower and Mrs. Blake VanEs**

#LoveUp is an accidental movement started by Johnjay Van Es when autocorrect changed his friend, Hall of Fame NFL Super Bowl Quarterback, Kurt Warner’s text from ‘Love It’ to ‘Love Up’. Originally founded as the Johnjay and Rich Care for Kids Foundation, the charitable organization changed its name to the Johnjay and Rich #LoveUp Foundation in 2017.

The #LoveUp Foundation was chosen by the Arizona Department of Child Safety in 2014 to help maintain the Children’s Heart Gallery. The Children’s Heart Gallery is an online photographic portal that showcases children in the foster care system who are available for adoption and in need of a forever home. #LoveUp provides six days each year for foster children to attend a Heart Gallery event where they receive haircuts, new clothes and a professional photography session for their inclusion in the Heart Gallery.



The Governor and Mrs. Ducey recently took part in a #LoveUp Children’s Heart Gallery event held at the Odyssea Aquarium, providing fifty children within the DCS foster care program a day of special treatment and an opportunity to meet prospective families. In 2019, over 3,143 children in foster care were positively affected by the #LoveUp Foundation.

### **Trauma to Triumph, Streetlight USA**

#### **Ms. Skye Steele**

StreetLight USA is a 24 bed group home offering trauma-informed enhanced services to meet the unique needs of female/child victims, with 10 beds offering in-patient behavioral health treatment for CSEC victims. StreetLight USA provides crisis intervention, stabilization and housing, through a variety of programs and services tailored to meet the needs of young girls at-risk-for and victims-of child sex trafficking. Streetlight USA was established in 2009 by several local churches. Streetlight USA’s serves an important role in the community as child and family team members who uphold collaboration, communication, education, support and child advocacy.

### **STATE AGENCY REPORTS**

#### **Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family (GOYFF)**

##### **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes**

Through funding from the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family, Prevent Child Abuse Arizona has partnered with the Arizona ACE Consortium to develop trauma-informed online modules to train providers on the various ways trauma impacts the brain. The modules are designed to provide ongoing support to Arizonans in order to mitigate the lifelong, devastating impacts of adverse childhood experiences.

The Arizona ACE Consortium promotes ideas, policies and practices that reduce and prevent childhood adversity and build resilience in individuals, families and communities. ACEs can last a lifetime, but they don't have to.

#### **Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS)**

##### **Director Mike Faust**

The Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) works to engage Arizona children and families to ensure safety, strengthen families, and achieve permanency, creating family environments free from abuse and neglect, for children to thrive. Director Faust provides on-going updates of the activities of DCS at each of the CSFE meetings. These updates included highlights of the progress DCS has made with its data, staffing and overall impact on children and families.

DCS continues to make efforts to bring substance abuse treatment options that incorporate healing with a family component and focus. DCS continues to work to connect the hundreds of youth aging out of care to services as they are considered to be “aging out” of the system and it is a critical time for these youth.

A complete summary of council presentations can be found on website

<https://goyff.az.gov/councils-commissions/council-child-safety-and-family-empowerment>

## COUNCIL SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

It is the privilege of the Council to recognize extraordinary contributions made by individuals, families, organizations and congregations that work to provide safety and well-being for Arizona's most vulnerable populations. The Council considers nominations for recognition throughout the year and incorporates formal recognition into its regular Council meetings, where nominees are presented with a certificate of appreciation, have a photo opportunity with Council chairs, and their accomplishments are celebrated.

This report highlights the three nominees who were selected and celebrated during 2019/2020. The Council would also like to acknowledge and extend its gratitude for every person, family, and organization that fights for the future of Arizona's children and families.

### Mr. Greg McKay – Individual

Greg McKay, former Director of the Department of Child Safety, was recognized for his outstanding leadership and the progress he made within Arizona's Department of Child Safety. As director, Mr. McKay led several breakthrough initiatives for the department.

Under Greg's leadership, DCS:

- Reduced the backlog of uninvestigated cases
- Safely reduced the number of children in state foster care by 25%, reversing a ten-year growth trend
- Reduced hotline hold times, reduced staff caseloads, decreased congregate care and increased family and community engagement in the service of the state's most vulnerable children.





### Ms. Christal Ziegler – Individual

Ms. Ziegler works with families in embracing the journey of foster care and adoption by walking them through the process, assisting them in getting licensed as foster parents, attending court hearings, ISPs, IEPs and helping to locate and implement needed services.

In her own words, Christal states, “ By embracing the journey myself, I have been a more compassionate and empathetic advocate & I now understand on an even deeper level that foster care and adoption can transform lives, not only for the children entering a foster home, but the families that are blessed to welcome them into their home.”

### Mr. Leonard Clinton – Individual

Mr. Clinton was recognized for his decision to foster to adopt due to the need he saw in the community for permanent homes for older children in foster care. His passion for the process was fueled by his strong desire to parent a child that needed a forever home. Leonard completed his family by adopting his foster son on National Adoption Day in November 2019.



## COUNCIL WORKGROUP REPORTS

Three workgroups regularly convene to support the goals of the Council. Accomplishments within fiscal year 2019/20 include:

- Identifying ways to support caregivers with self-identified ACEs through peer-to-peer group support
- Developing statewide outreach strategies to increase the number of highly quality child care in the faith communities
- Identifying high-risk, vulnerable communities to identify gaps in services and to inform, educate and improve the rate of children going into out-of-home placements

### Outreach Workgroup Report

The Outreach Workgroup, chaired by Katie O'Dell, engages with Arizona's faith-based communities to learn how communities of faith can best serve and support children and families impacted by the child welfare system. Through an increased awareness and understanding of ACEs among the faith-based community, and the importance of using appropriate trauma-informed programs and strategies designed to mitigate the impact of ACEs on a child's future, faith based partners are answering the call.

The Outreach Workgroup strove to identify high-risk communities to create a forum to share parenting techniques with families. The planned forum was designed to connect the community with resources from DCS and other community stakeholders. The workgroup members received presentations from various DCS departments in order to receive more education on how DCS approaches removals of neglect versus abuse and what tools are used to make these difficult decisions. Information was also provided from the DCS Office of Prevention to provide education regarding outreach activities, information and community partners they are working with in the state.

### Prevention Workgroup Report

The Prevention Workgroup, chaired by Ms. Vicki Mayo and co-chaired by Ms. Ginger Ward, builds prevention awareness and support for families needing assistance to avoid involvement with DCS. The workgroup analyzes data and conducts research to understand family situations that have required involvement by DCS and removal of children from the family home. They then seek to address these issues by identifying and offering solutions that are trauma-informed and ACEs aware.

Workgroup members discussed the faith community symposium that was held in May 2019 with the goal of dispelling myths regarding providing childcare to DCS children. Areas of the state that need more child care were identified and discussed. Workgroup members also discussed the work being done to educate child care providers about alternatives to expulsion.

The workgroup identified three potential projects:

- Reach Arizona communities through roundtable discussions
- Create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to educate the community about expulsions and parental rights
- Work with Arizona Department of Health Services to embed information on Trauma Informed Care into childcare settings

### **Support Subcommittee**

The Support Workgroup, chaired by Berisha Black and co-chaired by Andrea Stuart, identifies and develops strategic training for communities and adults that interact with children in the foster care system. The workgroups approaches its work by considering the needs of families and is grounded in a key SAMHSA recommendation to incorporate efforts focused on reducing intergenerational transmission of ACEs.

Workgroup members discussed the outcomes of a 7-week pilot ACEs Support Group that was held from June 2019 through July 2019. A report of the outcomes and study will be forthcoming in 2020. Based on feedback from Support Group Participants, the workgroup discussed potential projects to work on including how to offer virtual ACEs Support Groups and how to build on in-person and remote support groups by partnering with community stakeholders across the state.