

Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services Advisory  
Board Race Equity Resolution

WHEREAS, The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Advisory Board serves the children and families of Cuyahoga County by providing recommendations to the County Executive and the leadership of DCFS regarding opportunities both to improve the outcomes of families that are engaged in services and to decrease the risk factors in those communities associated with abuse or neglect, and

WHEREAS, The responsibilities of the DCFS Advisory Board shall include gathering information, offering advice on policies related to services for children and families, and facilitating communication between DCFS and community groups. Specifically, the duties include:

- Advising and supporting the Director of the Division of Children & Family Services in formulating policy, planning and developing programs to meet the needs of families and children at risk of abuse or neglect in a trauma-informed, culturally-responsive manner;
- Advising and recommending to the Cuyahoga County Executive and Cuyahoga County Council on specific issues related to families and children at risk of abuse or neglect and, but not limited to, the administrative jurisdiction of the Division of Children & Family Services;
- Supporting the engagement of and coordination between the Division of Children & Family Services and community groups and organizations interested in supporting families and children at risk of abuse or neglect;
- Advising and facilitating resource development to achieve the goals of the Division;
- Offering technical expertise to the Administrator and Division of Children & Family Services in achieving its goals and objectives;
- Helping to inform and educate families in need of services in Cuyahoga County about the programs and activities available to them;
- Advocating on behalf of families and children at risk of abuse or neglect in Cuyahoga County;
- Being aware of the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS), the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court and related agencies addressing the needs of families and children at risk of abuse or neglect, policies, services and allocations for the purpose of advocating for Cuyahoga County DCFS and the families and children at risk of abuse or neglect; and

WHEREAS, Many of the social disparities associated with systemic racism and are also known risk factors for child abuse and neglect, including:

- Parental characteristics (young age, low income, low education, single parenthood)
- Substance abuse/mental health issues
- Parent's lack of understanding of a child's development and related needs
- Social isolation and lack of community-based supports
- Family violence and community violence
- Parenting stress

Adopted 12/7/2020

- Historic neighborhood disinvestment

WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics has specifically stated that “although progress has been made toward racial equality and equity, the evidence to support the continued negative impact of racism on health and well-being through implicit and explicit biases, institutional structures and interpersonal relationships is clear. Failure to address racism will continue to undermine health equity for all children, adolescents, emerging adults and their families,” and

WHEREAS, Black families comprise 30% of the population of Cuyahoga County, but 59% of the children receiving DCFS services are black, and

WHEREAS, Racism has been declared a public health crisis by the Cuyahoga County Council, and

WHEREAS, The Cuyahoga County Council has established a Citizen’s Advisory Council on Equity to focus on disparities in:

- Healthcare;
- The criminal justice system;
- Access to healthy food;
- Safe and affordable housing;
- Well-paying jobs;
- Business ownership opportunities;
- Quality transportation;
- Educational opportunities;
- Safe places to be active;

THEREFORE be it

RESOLVED, The DCFS Advisory Board supports efforts to address racism as a public health crisis, and the implementation plans should be equitable, hold all systems accountable, and focus on supporting pregnant women, children and young parents in order to prevent the intergenerational cycle of adversity, abuse or neglect; and

RESOLVED, The DCFS Advisory Board supports internal opportunities to support families and reduce the incidence of abuse and neglect, such as:

- Implicit Bias training for all DCFS employees, contractors, and funded program staff
- Data collection and monitoring to assess racial inequities in service eligibility and utilization (e.g., cash assistance)
- Evaluation of DCFS hiring and retention practices
- Ensure delivery of culturally appropriate programs and services to consumers and constituents
- Gathering feedback from consumers and constituents on DCFS service quality and needs

RESOLVED, The DCFS Advisory Board supports external opportunities to support families and reduce the incidence of abuse and neglect, such as:

- Implicit Bias training requirement for all contracted providers, including policy development
- Prioritizing financial resources for communities of highest need (ie, education, housing, food access, transportation, outdoor recreation etc)
- Providing incentives for local employers with policies that support equity (ie. Livable wages, paid maternity leave, on the job training/education reimbursement)
- Providing financial incentives for new businesses in under-resourced communities
- Ensuring hospital system community benefit dollars are invested in communities of the highest need

RESOLVED, The DCFS Advisory Board shall collaborate with the Cuyahoga County Citizen's Advisory Council on Equity to address the underlying inequities that drive disparities in the realm of child and family services.