



Media Release

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Deputy Director Leaving to Work with National Nonprofit ZERO TO THREE

Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) Deputy Director Janie Huddleston announced Wednesday that she will be leaving the agency Oct. 24, marking the end of a 16-year career in which she led efforts to overhaul the state's child welfare and behavioral health systems.

Huddleston began working at DHS in September 1998 as the Director of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and was tapped to be one of the agency's two deputy directors in May 2004. She is responsible for the divisions of Behavioral Health Services, Children and Family Services, County Operations, Developmental Disabilities and Medical Services (Medicaid).

"In the past ten years, Janie's fingerprints are on virtually every major step we've taken to improve the lives of Arkansas's vulnerable children and families," said DHS Director John Selig. "You don't often find her mix of talent, drive and compassion. We will miss her."

Huddleston has been instrumental in leading several initiatives, including:

- Expanding state-funded pre-kindergarten program to at-risk children ages 3 and 4;
- Creating the DHS Fellows program;
- Developing agency-wide offices focused on quality assurance and effective policies; and
- Starting the Safe Babies Court Team pilot project aimed at supporting the youngest foster children and their families.

She's currently overseeing efforts to identify and retain high-performing employees.

"Janie is never satisfied with where we are; she's always looking for innovation and improvement. And she has the talent and dedication to take on complex problems, identify a course of action, and then inspire those around her to work as a team until they're successful," Selig said.

Huddleston is leaving to serve as Project Director for the Quality Improvement Center for Research-Based Infant-Toddler Court Teams at ZERO TO THREE, a nonprofit organization that provides parents, professionals and policymakers the knowledge and the know-how to nurture early development.

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“It's been an honor to work for DHS and the great people in Arkansas,” Huddleston said. “My new job affords me the opportunity to pursue my passion of supporting families and children in the most critical stages of development.”