



DHS News

Newsletter of the Allegheny County
Department of Human Services



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Five questions with Wendy Smith

Wendy is prevention specialist in the Office of Community Services. She can be reached at 412-350-6699 or wendy.smith@alleghenycounty.us.

1. What was your path to Allegheny County/DHS?

When I heard about DHS applying for the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC), they had to identify the staff for key roles, including the ELRC director. What the ELRC does to combine the child care subsidy officially with quality improvement efforts was something I dreamed of seeing happen when I worked for the state back in 2005 so of course I jumped at the chance to be part of doing this work.

2. Tell us a bit about the work you do.

I provide general oversight of the ELRC and act as primary liaison with staff in the state Office of Child Development and Early Learning. Since we just opened July 1, 2019, many of my activities are still primarily working with my assistant directors to look at our processes and refine them to better serve families and child care programs. Another major aspect of my daily work is linking all our early learning opportunities in DHS to create as many high-quality settings as possible, including home visiting. Right now, we are engaged in a major effort to evolve family support to serve more families, including being a service access point for relative providers paid through the child care subsidy.

3. What has been going on with the ELRC since it opened last July?

We have been helping families access the child care subsidy and for child care providers to strengthen the quality of their practices.

4. What most excites you about the work you do?

The chance to offer children and families the services that will help them thrive and for children to reach their full potentials in life. The early years are critical, and I am thrilled to be part of making those services be the best they can be.

5. What is most important thing DHS staff should know about your role?

Our work is a critical access points to get to families and ensure they have all the information and supports they need to be strong and to raise healthy, vibrant children. Look to us for ways to share best practices and critical information so our most vulnerable families are on pathways to achieve their goals.