



DDS Director's New Year Address

January

1/1 New Year's Day

1/6 Epiphany

1/20 Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr Day

Happy New Year DDS Team!

I'm hoping everyone had the chance to spend some quality time with their friends and families over the holidays and hoping you found some peace and joy! I don't know about you, but the holidays themselves can be a stressful time in doing "all the things" and I'm looking forward to getting back into the normal groove of life. In reflecting back on my first six months with DDS and DHS, there is never a boring day. It's one of the best parts of the job – continuous learning. I just finished attending big chunks of Phase Class at the Conway Human Development Center. It was truly a great experience for me, and I really enjoyed getting to spend time with some of our members there that our wonderful staff are caring for 24/7. This will also be my first legislative session on this side of the fence with DHS. I've heard that things can get a little hectic for the next few months and appreciate your patience and continued guidance as we work our way through this session. In 2025, here are some of the priorities that we will be working on:

- Continued implementation of the ARPA pilots with A-State
- Implementation of the electronic medical record – MatrixCare with the HDCs
- Making updates to the PT/OT/SP Therapy Manual
- Improving the Forensic Process in collaboration with OSAMH for our IDD members
- Re-establishing the Behavioral Consultation Committee (a partnership with the HDCs and our Community Partners)

I'm looking forward to a fantastic 2025! It's been a blessing to join the best team here at DHS. I truly appreciate all that you are doing and have done to support the most vulnerable population of Arkansans every day. Happy New Year and go conquer those 2025 goals!

Jennifer Brezée, LCSW

Division of Developmental Disability Services

Director

Making it happen!

Beginning August 2024, Title V Case Manager, Tracy Harris, RN was contacted by Tanna Sutter, parent of Isaiah who was diagnosed with Osteogenesis Imperfecta. Ms. Sutter was inquiring about an adaptive seat for their family vehicle that would not cause a financial hardship. Isaiah was becoming too heavy to be lifted safely.

With Title V funds, Isaiah was able to receive the vehicle conversion for the adaptive seat on December 13, 2024. Isaiah demonstrated that he could safely transfer from his wheelchair to the new seat stating, "I feel like X-man in this thing".



Tracy with Isaiah



Isaiah and his family



Tracy-

Thank you doesn't even sound like enough! You will never know how much all your work & efforts mean to us! We pray God continues to bless you; you are a light in this world & we know without your hard work & dedication this wouldn't be possible! Thank you again!

The Sutters, Philip, Tanna,
Isaiah & Grace!

Thank you so much
for everything

12/9/24

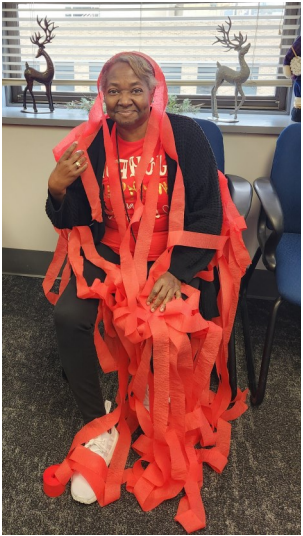
CHDC Superintendent shares Polar Express photos



DDS 4th floor Candyland



DDS Director's Christmas Lunch



Ms. Santa aka Patricia Jenkins spreading joy!



Merinesa Morris, Waiver Application Unit Supervisor



Congratulations and Best Wishes on your next endeavor!

You have been instrumental to team DDS through the years! You started in the Waiver Application Unit and worked your way to become the supervisor of that unit. You were a team player and leader. Thanks for bringing your A-game everyday. You will truly be missed.

Save the Date

The Regular Session of the 95th General Assembly convenes on
Monday, January 13, 2025. (Bill filing began on Friday,
November 15, 2024.)



The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is a diverse group comprised of parents/guardians of children with special healthcare needs. The PAC advocates and educates families, government agencies, and healthcare professionals on issues that affect children with special healthcare needs. The PAC is an extension to DHS/DDS Children's Special Services/Title V. Each year, the PAC hosts an annual conference and Disability Resource Expo. On Saturday, **April 12, 2025**, the PAC will host the Disability Resource Expo and the 12th Annual Family Bistro Conference in Cabot, AR.

The PAC will educate families and health care professionals on topics such as Bullying, Transition to Healthcare, Legislative Updates and other disability resources.

Danielle Kimbrough

DDS/Children's Special Services/ Title V Program Coordinator

Comments, suggestions, Q&A



What would you like to see or learn about in 2025? Want to submit a story? Please send all to Yvette Swift at yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov by the 15th of each month.