



South Carolina Department of  
**CHILDREN'S  
 ADVOCACY**  
 Advocacy. Accountability. Service.

# MONTHLY UPDATE

Department of Children's Advocacy Monthly Update  
*Connecting with and updating our community*

## DCA is Awarded Federal Grant!

On October 1, 2021, the Department of Children's Advocacy (DCA) was awarded a federal grant through the Department of Public Safety (DPS). DCA's grant is entitled "The Juvenile Court Program" and is designed to promote placements of justice-involved youth in the least restrictive, most family-like setting based on the youth's needs; to promote community-based alternatives to detention; and to promote equity for justice-involved youth. DCA's grant implementation will include gathering, analyzing, and applying quantitative and qualitative data through court observation in three pilot counties: Richland, Aiken, and York. In the coming weeks, DCA will be posting the position for a grant coordinator. Congratulations to Deputy Child Advocate of System Improvement Kayla Capps for submitting a successful grant application!



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## ***Deputy Kayla Capps***

### ***Deputy Child Advocate of System Improvement***



***KAYLA CAPPS, J.D.***

#### ***Deputy Child Advocate of System Improvement***

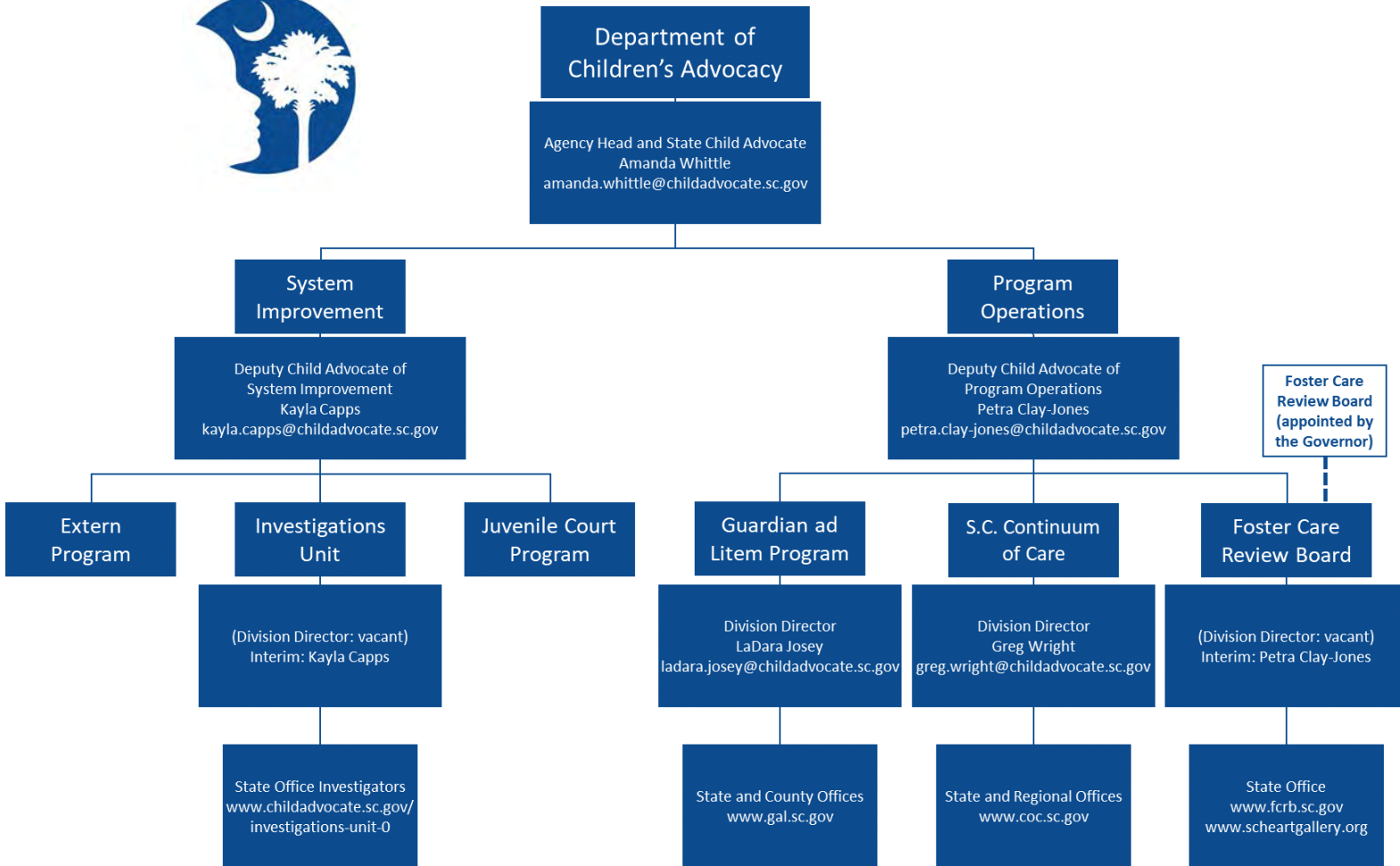
DCA Director Amanda Whittle has modified the agency's organizational structure and re-designated Kayla Capps' title from Deputy Child Advocate of Investigations to Deputy Child Advocate of System Improvement. Deputy Capps' title was formally changed in an effort to appropriately describe her current role within the agency and her contribution to our state's system of care.

Director Whittle hired Kayla Capps as a deputy in December of 2019 for the primary role of developing, supervising, and leading the Investigations Unit. Since that time, Deputy Capps has developed and implemented critical incident notification processes with other agencies; created a call tracking system; reconfigured the Investigation Unit's methods for data entry and issue tracking; contracted with an interpreting agency to engage interpreters for callers; provided supervision and training for the Investigations Unit; redesigned the Investigation Unit's website information; and made significant progress with establishing and exceeding accountability measures for the Investigations Unit.

Beyond the scope of supervising the Investigations Unit, Deputy Capps co-created an online Resource Library; serves on and contributes to system improvement committees regarding DSS, DMH and DJJ; successfully completed safeTALK and ASIST suicide prevention training; and has prepared and submitted two grant applications regarding juvenile justice reform. Deputy Capps also established a relationship between the Department of Children's Advocacy and the University of South Carolina School of Law's Extern Program. As a result of her initiative, our agency has benefitted from having third year law student externs with the agency for the Spring 2020; Fall 2020; Spring 2021; Summer 2021; and Fall 2021 semesters. Deputy Capps has created objectives and schedules for the externs and has provided supervision, coaching, and learning opportunities for them. The externs have been invaluable contributors to the agency regarding research, data compilation, visibility and awareness, and process improvement. Deputy Capps is interviewing candidates for the Spring 2022 semester. Deputy Capps has conducted site visits; engaged with children, youth and families; participated in court hearings; and collaborated with other agencies in case specific and system improvement advocacy. Through her leadership, Deputy Capps has increased the agency's capacity to meet overarching legislative duties and improve outcomes for children.

***Thank you and congratulations to Deputy Kayla Capps!***

# Department of Children's Advocacy Organization Chart

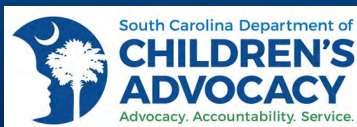


## Mission:

The Department of Children's Advocacy champions advocacy, accountability, and service to improve outcomes for children served by state agencies in South Carolina.

## Vision:

Growing a community where children thrive.





# Fall Public Hearings for Children's Issues



Connelly-Anne Ragley (DSS Director of Communications and External Affairs) and Kayla Capps (Deputy Child Advocate of System Improvement) listen to testimony at the JCLCC's October 15, 2021 public hearing. (Photo Source: [live5news.com](http://live5news.com))



The Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children was created by statute to research issues regarding the children of South Carolina and to offer policy and legislative recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.

The South Carolina Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children (the "Children's Committee") held their last 2021 Fall public hearing on October 15, 2021 in Charleston, South Carolina. "Tonight, we heard about human trafficking, we heard about maybe a change in the child abuse and neglect definition that's in the statute. We heard about incredible work that's going on with advocates all over the state and folks that are asking legislators to support that," Amanda Whittle, State Child Advocate and Director of South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy, said. Whittle says she's "proud to be part of a state that gives people access to legislators and leaders at the state level and says she believes legislative action will happen for some of the issues discussed tonight."



Click [here](#) for the full article and video by Live 5 News

*We Promote*  
**SAFE SLEEP**

Place babies  
**A**  
ALONE  
**B**  
on their  
BACK  
**C**  
and in a  
CRIB

DSS SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
South Carolina Department of CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY  
Upstate AHEC Excellence in Health Care Through Education  
dhec South Carolina DAODAS Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services  
SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Healthy Connections MEDICAID

## Safe Sleep Awareness in October and Beyond

Approximately 3500 infants die in the United States each year due to sleep-related issues. In South Carolina, unsafe sleep is the leading cause of infant death after the first month of life based on SCDHEC data.

Governor Henry McMaster proclaimed October as Safe Sleep Awareness Month. A Safe Sleep Summit included weekly sessions during the month to raise awareness and to provide education regarding the ways to prevent sleep-related infant deaths. Awareness month ends, but our safe sleep advocacy continues. Join us in promoting SCDHEC's safe sleep education which is found [here](#).

# Meet Katedra C.

FEATURED ON THE S.C. HEART GALLERY

Photographer: Mike Baker ©2021



*"I am brilliant,  
amazing and talented!"*

**Katedra** is a dynamic teen who has a zest for life and has a great personality. Swimming, painting, riding bikes and traveling are some of her favorite extracurricular activities. Her favorite foods are vegetables and mac & cheese.

*"I never give up!"*



When asked what she considers the most amazing thing about her personality, **Katedra** says, "I never give up." Born in 2007, Katedra hopes to have a career in law enforcement and become a police officer. She's seeking a family that will love and accept her. Learn more [here](#).



What are the requirements to adopt? How much does it cost? How long is the wait?  
Get the answers to questions about adopting a child who is in foster care [here](#).



# The State Fair was in Town!



The South Carolina State Fair was held in October, and we appreciate seeing DCA staff enjoying food and fellowship on a beautiful Fall afternoon.

*Did you know?*

The South Carolina State Fair is a local, self-sustaining, non-profit organization. Since 1997, our fair has donated over \$4 million in scholarships for SC Students. Learn more about the S.C. State Fair traditions [here](#).

In the photo above, Department of Children's Advocacy staff with the Foster Care Review Division enjoyed time together at the 2021 S.C. State Fair on a beautiful October day. (Photo Credit: Christina Grant)



*Learn more about our agency [here](#)*

## *What do people say about the Department of Children's Advocacy?*

"I just wanted to send a thank you your way...within a few days of you getting involved we finally saw immediate action and response on this case. This could not have been done without you or your efforts ...."

~ Catherine Donnelly, Winchester DSS, Virginia

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