

July 2020



Scioto County Developmental Disabilities

Serving People for a Lifetime.



INSIDE

*Wallace Steps into Role as
Director of Early Childhood Services*

Purcell Outlines the Way Forward for SCDD

COVID-19 pandemic response inspires changes to how we work

SCDD continues to work through some very difficult circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After discussing our current situation and our vision into the future, regarding what we want to look like operationally under this new normal, the Leadership Team and myself have and will continue to work on a phasing-in plan we are actually currently implementing. SCDD's plan will be rolled out in three phases:

PHASE I – NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This phase actually began June 1. The first phase consisted of the department heads assessing their respective departments to determine what essential needs were not being met and could not be met by remote means. The department heads were given full autonomy on how they brought certain staff members back (it had to be determined necessary and essential), to what degree they brought them back under (limited schedules, rotating, etc.). It is important to note that due to the diverse nature of our organization, these decisions differ department by department.

PHASE II – STAFFING

This phase is scheduled to begin Aug. 1. In this phase all employees including those whose job duties are not considered workable remotely will be brought back to their work environments that will enable them to complete their assigned duties. Although the majority of our employees are

able to complete their job tasks remotely, there are a select few that aren't able. Between now and Aug. 1, the leadership team will be assessing what is needed as far as frequency and duration of work schedules for these staff members. We will adhere to the orders of the Governor's Office as to building capacity and all required safety measures to ensure we maintain a safe and healthy work environment.

In this phase we will continue to limit face to face meetings/visits to only those tasks that can't be completed through technological or remote means.

PHASE III – REOPENING

This phase is migratory in nature and really is fine-tuning, revamping, and otherwise improving the practices we set in motion in Phase II. Keep in mind, Phase II is the "reopening" phase, and we only have Phase III, because we know there will need to be revisions to Phase II. Once this phase is complete it will be what Scioto County Developmental Disabilities will look like into the future. It needs to be pointed out that although we will be 100 percent operational, the organization is likely to look much different than it did prior to the



Matt Purcell
SCDD
Superintendent

COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our departments will maintain some form of a hybrid model of delivering services. This is due to a couple of reasons. First, we have found these remote opportunities to be extremely useful and effective. Second, it is my belief that by allowing flexibility our staff will feel valued and thus will improve morale and productivity.

Vern Riffe School will operate according to the rules, laws, and regulations set forth by the Ohio Department of Education

and may differ than the rest of the SCDD departments. When information related to VRS Opening becomes available it will be shared with school staff, students, families, and all other stakeholders in the timeliest fashion possible.

Obviously, this plan is subject to change depending on guidance received from the Governor's Office, the Centers for Disease Control, the Ohio Department of Health, Scioto County Health Department, and the Portsmouth City Health Department. If we feel it is necessary to modify, extend, amend, or otherwise change this plan, it will be communicated in the timeliest fashion possible.

(Purcell is SCDD superintendent. SCDD serves more than 700 individuals and families.)

Wallace Steps into Director Role at Carousel

Scioto County Developmental Disabilities has a new Director of Early Childhood Services

Scioto County Developmental Disabilities has a new Director of Early Childhood Services.

Erica Wallace, who took over the position on July 1, has worked as a Developmental Specialist and for SCDD for several years has moved into the job, which is based at the Carousel Center. Wallace worked with retired director Tammy Nelson for nearly a year to transition into the position.

Early Childhood Services encompasses Early Intervention for babies and children living in Scioto County who have been diagnosed with developmental disabilities.

"I want to thank the staff and give them my full appreciation for being so flexible and being willing to step outside their comfort zone and serve families during this time," Wallace said. "I'm excited to see what the next years bring for all of us together."

Nobody could have foreseen such a change in personnel and what services might look like under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic this time last year. While technology has long been an important part of the offerings to families, it has become crucial as the delivery of services to our community's youngest children is ever-changing.

"What we used to do when I came into the program was we used to take a bag into the homes and we'd call it our bag of tricks," Wallace said. The model has evolved to a coaching method for families using items already in the home, which means children can more consistently learn skills and hit developmental markers with the help of their families.

"Over the last probably four or five years, we've shifted our whole model to a coaching model to empower families to be the best play partner they can be," Wallace said. "We train them with the coaching model. We have really seen that blossom over the years."

One trend Wallace and the rest of the Early Childhood Services staff see is the uptick in diagnoses of autism and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. Both recently

became qualifying diagnoses, meaning children living with these developmental disabilities automatically are qualified for services through SCDD and Early Childhood Services.

"Those two diagnoses are at the top," Wallace said. Formerly, the top diagnoses for children were Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and spina bifida. "We still have those, but autism and NAS are the majority of the diagnoses we see now in our area."

The staff at Carousel are constantly undergoing professional education, and Wallace looks to improve the use of technology as a tool Developmental Specialists to conduct virtual visits with families and children. Virtual visits were also available to medically fragile families during flu season, but the usage expanded widely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The option is available to all families served by Early Childhood Services, and has been a huge success in being able to continue those important face-to-face coaching sessions between Developmental Specialists and families.

Wallace worked closely with former director Tammy Nelson for nearly a year in order to make the transition a smooth one. No one could have predicted it would have happened during a global pandemic, though.

"Nobody planned, and I certainly wouldn't have chosen to have the last three months of employment working from home," Nelson said. "We've worked very closely together over the last year. She's as ready as she can be, I think she'll do fine."

The thing about Early Childhood Services, and Early Intervention in particular, is how closely the staff work with families.

"It takes a special person to be a Developmental Specialist. Empathy, judgement



"I'm excited to see what the next years bring for all of us together."

Erica Wallace

Director of Early Childhood Services

aside, and passion to drive the force of making sure that you're doing everything possible in those early years. We all know that's really when brain development is optimal. We miss that chance and that's when the child pays for it," Nelson said. "Families come first and we really work hard to make families as happy as they can be with the challenges they've been presented."

While Nelson is looking forward to gardening, reading, and spending time with her family, Wallace has hit the ground running with virtual services and interagency partnerships.

"I want to thank the staff and give them my full appreciation for being so flexible and being willing to step outside their comfort zone and serve families during this time," Wallace said.

Scioto DD Superintendent Matt Purcell said he is appreciative of the contributions of both Wallace and Nelson. Both have worked toward improving services to local families and children while staying atop an evolving system of approaches.

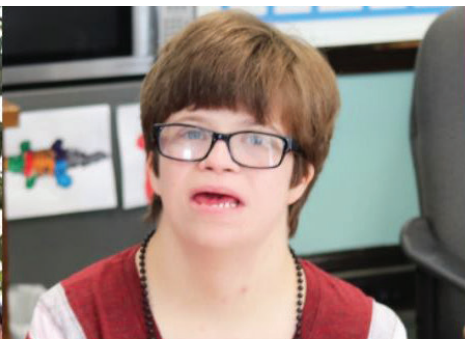
"Tammy has been a proven leader with many successes in our Early Childhood Services program. As mandates and methods evolved, so did the approaches at the Carousel Center," Purcell said. "Tammy and the Early Intervention team made continuing education a priority and that has made all the difference in the lives of Scioto County children with developmental disabilities and their families."

"I know the dedication and commitment to local children and families will continue under Erica's leadership."

**JACEE
YEARWOOD**



**MADDI
GRASHEL**



**JUSTIN
SANFORD**



**ALEX
SHORTRIDGE**



congratulations **VRS CLASS OF 2020**

JACEE DANIELLE YEARWOOD

Jacee is the daughter of William and Christina Yearwood of Portsmouth, Ohio. Jacee has participated in the VRS school vocational program, Girl Scouts, VRS Book Club, Special Olympics: cheerleading, volleyball, bowling, basketball, track and field. She is an avid reader! She has participated in summer community youth work experiences. She enjoys singing, karaoke, listening to music and learning about other cultures. Following graduation Jacee plans to obtain employment in the community and participate in day programming at STAR, Inc.

ALEXANDER CHRISTIAN SHANE SHORTRIDGE

Alex is the son of Kristi Ramsey and Shane Shortridge of Portsmouth, Ohio. Alex has participated in Special Olympics bowling, basketball, track and field. He enjoys music, Pittsburgh Steelers, building things, sharing with friends, singing, dancing, Fortnite and spending time with cousins and family. Alex loves to go to Myrtle Beach. Following graduation Alex plans to participate in day programming at STAR, Inc. and to obtain community employment.

JUSTIN KALEB SANFORD

Justin lives with his family Jenny, Aubry and Marsha Gulley in New Boston, Ohio. Justin has participated in the VRS school vocational program, Boy Scouts, VRS Book Club, Special Olympics: basketball, volleyball, bowling, track and field. He enjoys dancing, singing, karaoke, drawing, hanging out with his friends and he loves to vacation on a cruise ship! Following graduation Justin plans to participate in day programming at STAR, Inc.

MADISON JORDAN GRASHEL

Maddi is the daughter of Amanda and Matt Chabot and the late Tom Grashel of Portsmouth, Ohio. Madison has participated in the VRS vocational program, Girl Scouts, VRS Book Club, Special Olympics: cheerleading, bowling, track and field. She has participated in summer youth community work experiences. She enjoys swimming, camping, music, dancing, movies and using her iPad. She loves to vacation at the beach. Following graduation Madison plans to participate in day programming at STAR, Inc.



HELP US HEAR YOUR VOICE!

Research study on the health of adults with Intellectual Disability (ID)

For this research,
we want to listen to
adults with ID



We want to know
how you feel about
YOUR health

What will you do?

- You and your support person will answer questions about your health in **two interviews**.
- The interviews can be completed from the safety of your home (online, by phone, and/or in-person).

How long will this take?

- 2-4 hours per interview.

Who is a support person?

- A family member, friend, or caregiver that knows you well.
- They will be your study partner.

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Want to know more?

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Email us:

rrtcnisonger@osumc.edu

In the 1st interview, you and your support person will each earn a \$25 gift card.

In the 2nd interview, you and your support person will each earn a \$50 gift card.



THE OHIO STATE
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NIDILRR
National Institute on Disability, Independent Living,
and Rehabilitation Research

CORONAVIRUS

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the coronavirus?

"Coronavirus" refers to a large family of viruses. However, the specific virus being referenced in media reports is a novel (or new) type of coronavirus that had not been previously identified.

Is the coronavirus like the common cold?

There are several types of coronavirus. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is not the same type that commonly circulates and causes mild illness like the common cold.

How does it spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading person-to-person. For that reason, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends patients with the coronavirus be isolated either in a hospital or at home until they recover and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

What are the symptoms?

Current symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and difficulty breathing. It is believed that symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

Is it dangerous?

The complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19 is not fully understood, but reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. This is a rapidly evolving situation. For the latest information, visit www.cdc.gov.

What is the risk for our area?

For the general American public, the immediate health risk is considered low. However, healthcare workers and travelers returning from certain locations are at an elevated risk of exposure. For a complete list of countries currently affected, visit www.cdc.gov.

How is it treated?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent the coronavirus, and no specific treatment. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid exposure. The CDC does not recommend wearing face masks unless you are sick. They are not an effective way for a healthy person to avoid the virus.

What steps can I take to avoid exposure?

There are several simple, everyday actions you can take to help prevent the spread of illness:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick, unless you have called your doctor and been instructed to receive medical care
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

How can I make sure I have the latest information?

This is a rapidly evolving situation. For the latest information on the coronavirus and COVID-19, visit www.cdc.gov.

