

WELCOME

Kara B. Wente, Director



What DCY was built to do

Expanded investment and sharper focus weren't enough on their own. Ohio had to change how services reach families.



One efficient system

Serve Ohio's 2.5 million children and families by combining functions from six state agencies, cutting duplicative programs, and raising administrative efficiency so essential services reach families more reliably.



Built on a deadline

Established July 3, 2023. Agency directors developed a detailed plan to transfer duties, functions, programs, and staff. The department's first programs transferring October 2023, and full transition of every program complete by January 1, 2025.



Doing more wasn't enough

Ohio had expanded its investments and sharpened its focus, yet key rankings kept falling. Steady effort was not closing the gap. The department had to work differently, not just spend more.

What's different: Public awareness, so parents, caregivers, and helping agencies know about and can reach services. And easier access, by integrating and individualizing support to fit each family.

How we got here

Consolidation, champions, and legislative buy-in.

Started in the Governor's budget

This started as a Governor's priority. It went into the executive budget before every detail was settled.

Written into law

House Bill 33 set the statutory deadlines that drove the pace and left little room for opposition to organize.

Established the foundation

DCY established principals and building blocks that served as the foundation for its approach and operations.

The payoff: 13% staff turnover through the transition, well below the ~30% typical, because we communicated early and honestly.

Data is the backbone

One department, shared data, shared accountability.



One roof, shared data

When programs sat in six agencies, the data sat in silos. Now the people and the data are together.



Accountability by design

A data-driven approach is built into the mission, so we can measure outcomes and show what is and isn't working.



Three bold goals

Ohio aims to be the best place in the country to start and raise a family and DCY outlined three bold goals to become a leading state.

The bottom line: Consolidation isn't the goal, it's the enabler. Shared data is what turns one department into real accountability.

DCY Short & Long Term Goals

Ohio aims to be the best place in the country to start and raise a family and DCY has outlined the following goals to become a leading state (e.g., top 10 in the country across 3 program areas):

Goal #1:

Maternal & Infant Wellness

Reduce the Rate of Infant Mortality (per 1000)

BASELINE

(CY22)

7.1

MOST RECENT

DATA

(released March 2026)

6.4* preliminary

SHORT-TERM GOAL

(SFY 2027)

6.0

LONG-TERM GOAL

(SFY 2029)

4.4

Goal #2:

Early Care & Education

Increase the Percentage of Children Demonstrating Readiness on the KRA

BASELINE

(Autumn 2022)

35.4%

MOST RECENT

DATA

(released June 2026)

44.8%

SHORT-TERM GOAL

(SFY 2027)

48%

LONG-TERM GOAL

(SFY 2029)

60%

Goal #3:

Children Services, Kinship, Foster & Adoption

Reduce the Rate of Children Entering Foster Care (per 1000)

BASELINE

(FFY22)

3.3

MOST RECENT

DATA

(released March 2026)

3.52

SHORT-TERM GOAL

(SFY 2027)

2.0

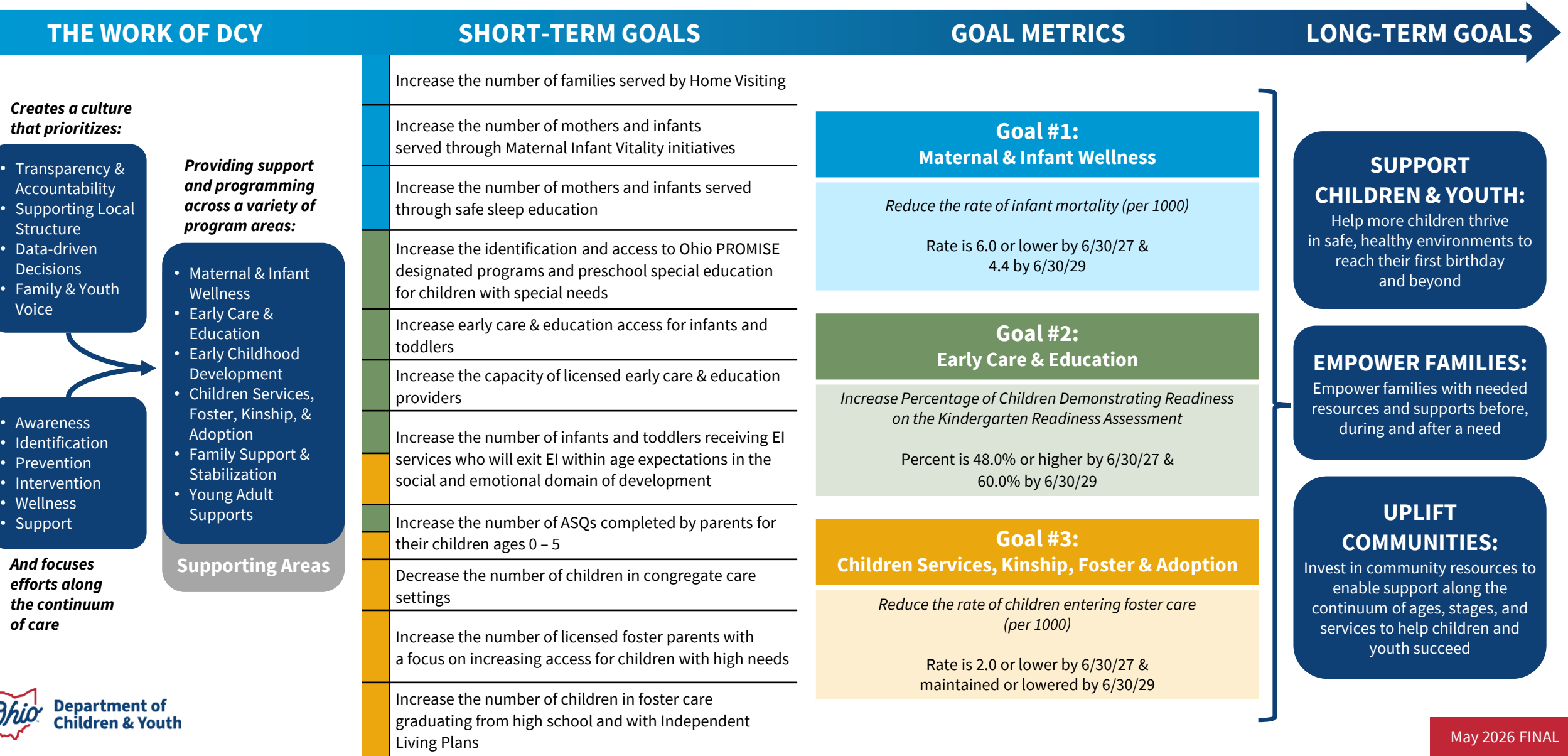
LONG-TERM GOAL

(SFY 2029)

2.0

Vision: Each Ohioan is able to live up to their full potential and have the opportunity to live their version of the American dream.

Mission: Promote positive, lifelong outcomes for Ohio youth through early intervention, quality education, and family support programs.



Early results, and what's next

Organized by function. Delivering more with less.



Bold goal gains

Lowest infant mortality rate in 20 years. Highest kindergarten readiness on record. Recurrent child maltreatment is down. Record number of students in foster care graduating high school.



Family voice

Ongoing family listening sessions resulting in statewide Parent and Youth Navigators with lived experience, and statewide expansion of 211.



Funding & budget wins

\$4M freed up as our kinship program became a federally recognized prevention service. Cut 40 positions and a staffing contract. Negotiating contracts down by millions to prove ROI before bigger investments.

Key takeaway: Consolidation gave us the ability to see the whole child across programs, and to be accountable for the result. That's the thing six separate agencies could never do. That's what this was for.

Questions



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GOVERNOR OF OHIO



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