



State of Wisconsin

Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor

Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

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Secretary Bicha Announces Administrator for Early Care and Education

Today, Department of Children and Families' Secretary Reggie Bicha announces the appointment of Dan Harris for the Division of Early Care and Education in the new Department of Children and Families. The appointment is effective July 1st upon the official formation of the Department of Children and Families.

"Dan believes strongly in the importance of early care and education in the lives of children," said Secretary Reggie Bicha. "Children and families in this state will benefit greatly from his leadership and experience. I am excited for Dan to join us in Wisconsin and the new Department as we work to ensure that all children have access to high quality early care and education."

Harris comes to Wisconsin from the New Mexico Department of Children, Youth and Families. In New Mexico, Harris was responsible for the quality rating system, child care assistance program, child care licensing, child care resource and referral, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and state funded pre-kindergarten. Prior to his role at the New Mexico Department, Harris worked in a range of state and federal programs in Illinois, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, food stamps, Medicaid, workforce development, and unemployment compensation.

Harris has a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Chicago.

The mission of the Division of Early Care and Education is to enhance the quality of early care and education across Wisconsin and ensure that it's affordable and accessible to all Wisconsin families. The Division includes child care regulation and licensing, child care certification, the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program, and a number of quality child care initiatives.

Last week, Secretary Bicha also announced the hiring of Nancy Wettersten as Chief Legal Counsel for the new Department.

Wettersten currently works at DeWitt Ross & Stevens, where she serves as the chairperson of the Family Law Practice Group. Her legal practice includes all family law matters, juvenile law, and criminal defense. A champion for children, Wettersten has long held a special interest in serving as guardian ad litem for children involved in the legal system. She argued a case before the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which expanded duties for attorneys who represent the best interests of children. Wettersten has taught extensively in family law for both the State Bar of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin Law School. Wettersten has been named by Madison Magazine as a Top Lawyer in adoption, juvenile, and family law. She also has been designated a Wisconsin Super Lawyer by Law & Politics magazine.

Secretary Bicha has also appointed Ron Hunt as Administrator of the Division of Enterprise Solutions in the new Department.

Hunt is the current Administrator in the Division of Family Supports in the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. His responsibilities include the Wisconsin Works (W-2) program, child care and child support.

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Hunt has extensive experience on workforce related programs within Wisconsin state government that provide support to job seekers, workers, and employers. Hunt provided leadership on the development of Wisconsin's job center system, and provided oversight on employment and training programs in the state.

Proposed in Governor Jim Doyle's 2007-2009 biennial budget, and passed in November 2007 by the Wisconsin legislature, the Department of Children and Families will be the state's first cabinet agency devoted exclusively to children and families.

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