

## Raimondo Administration Announces Choice for DCYF Director

**PROVIDENCE, R.I.** - Governor Gina M. Raimondo and Health and Human Services Secretary Elizabeth Roberts today announced Dr. Trista D. Piccola as their choice to lead the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). The Governor will submit her name to the Rhode Island State Senate today for their advice and consent.

“Dr. Piccola has dedicated her career to improving the wellbeing of children, families and communities,” said Governor Gina M. Raimondo. “She brings to this new role a strong background in child welfare and extensive government leadership experience. I am very pleased to have recruited strong, permanent leadership that will help us improve outcomes for kids and families and build on the strong foundation for reform we have established at DCYF over the last two years.”

“To recruit a top-caliber candidate for DCYF Director, EOHHS launched a robust national search and selection process, which included community representation on a search committee and public listening sessions,” said Secretary Elizabeth Roberts. “Dr. Piccola is dedicated to strengthening partnerships with the community, supporting staff and – most importantly – ensuring that Rhode Island’s most vulnerable children have an opportunity for a safe, healthy, successful and bright future.”

Dr. Piccola has more than 20 years of experience in the child welfare arena. She began her career as a Protective Services Case Manager at Lorain County Children Services in Elyria, Ohio, and has risen to her current position as the Deputy Director of Cuyahoga County Health and Human Services in Cleveland, Ohio, where her responsibilities included administrative oversight of the child welfare system.

"Rhode Island’s child welfare system is in the midst of reform and moving in the right direction,” Piccola said. “I look forward to building on the great work the Raimondo administration has accomplished on behalf of our youth and families. I will work hand-in-hand with the dedicated DCYF staff to move this important work forward. It’s an exciting and challenging time to join the team.”

Piccola will succeed Jamia McDonald as head of DCYF. During McDonald’s tenure, DCYF has kept children closer to their families and communities, improved preventative services to families, and reduced the number of children in group homes. The agency has also taken significant and innovative measures to improve quality, operations and management, deliver services more efficiently and help social workers better manage their caseloads.

As Director of the Department of Children, Youth and Families, Piccola will oversee the department’s Four Divisions: Child Welfare, Child Protective Services, Juvenile Correctional Services, and Permanency. She will manage a department of more than 500 employees and a more than \$220 million budget for this fiscal year.

Dr. Piccola has a BA from Baldwin Wallace College in Justice, an MS in Social Work and a PH.D in Social Welfare from Western Reserve University.

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