



Second LAC Professional Development Day at St. Augustine College



Conference attendees, General Session



AS THE NEW CHAIRPERSON

of the Latino Advisory Council I'd like to tell you a little about myself. As of 2019 I have been with

DCFS for nearly 20 years. Prior to joining DCFS, I was employed at Association House as a case manager in the Intact program. My first job in DCFS was as a child welfare specialist, placement worker and I had the honor of having Johnny Howard as my first supervisor. My

next position was in child protection. I was overseen by Priscilla Chadwick who provided me with excellent supervisory guidance. Making a difference every time I investigated abuse and neglect motivated me to stay in Child Protection for many years. Other jobs I held at DCFS include child welfare specialist, preventive services worker (Intake) and adoption worker. Currently I work as an integrated assessment coordinator. I have enjoyed learning and working in these multiple roles. The possibilities at DCFS are endless.

Besides serving as the chairperson for the DCFS Latino Advisory Council I am an active union

steward with Local 2081 of Council 31 and a member of the DCFS Asian American Advisory Council.

Working in child welfare with perseverance up to retirement is possible. It just takes patience, resilience, determination and passion. Let us continue to work hard for the benefit of children and their families. Children first, always.

Sincerely,

Nancy Rodriguez,

Latino Advisory Council
Chairperson



Encouraging words

by Vanessa Castro

“We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.”

—MOTHER TERESA

Brothers and sisters, your hard work, dedication and passion in protecting and advocating for positive change in the life of a child and their family is more than a drop in the ocean. At times, this job may seem impossible but never underestimate the impact you are having in the lives of children and families. Many of the families you encounter seem to be buried in a sea of trauma, poverty, poor mental health or substance abuse; yet each of you continue to fight the good fight to improve the lives of those you serve. Your efforts should be commended every day.

Although media outlets, the courts and even our colleagues can be critical of child welfare workers, you should keep your head up and not become discouraged. We all see the challenges that are thrown our way daily. As Mother Teresa stated, “the ocean would be less because of that missing drop”. DCFS and the world of child welfare would also be less without you because you all bring knowledge, compassion and expertise.



SAVE THE DATE!

**THE 2019
LATINO ADVISORY
COUNCIL
INSTITUTE DAY**

OCT. 11, 2019
NORTHEASTERN
ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHICAGO, IL



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Nancy Rodríguez
nancy.rodriguez@illinois.gov

Past Chairperson:
Juanita Calderón
juanita.calderon@illinois.gov

Scribe
Patricia Boscan
patricia.boscan@illinois.gov

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Child Safety & Permanency
Community Risk Reduction & Staffing
Data Validity & Disproportionality
Strategic Communications
Latino Family Institute

Biking 4 Ur Dreams update



CONGRATULATIONS to the Latin@ Biking 4-UR Dreams X-Treme Dream Team on their most recent event. The team successfully completed a cycling trip from Pilsen and Little Village in Chicago to the State Capitol on Latino Unity Day. The cyclists raised \$5,000 in Scholarship Funds for Latino youth otherwise not eligible for grants and loans.

Our well wishes for a swift recovery to Alex Medina who was seriously injured in a transit accident near the end of the ride.

<https://www.facebook.com/LatinosBiking4UrDreams/>



Springfield, IL



Coming full circle

By Julia Monzón

After 19 years in child protection I made the move to the Clinical Division. After much soul searching and prayer, I felt it was time to make a change and serve in a new way. I'd like to share an experience I had shortly before I left my position as a child protection supervisor at the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center (CCAC).

As some of you know, child protection can be one of the most heartbreaking jobs ever. As bilingual workers, we are often first responders for children and their parents. Parents and children often share their stories for the first time when we meet with them because we understand their language and their culture. We employ good clinical skills and best practices for engagement, but when they hear words in their own language it can be a key that opens a faucet of gushing running water. One of the hardest things a child

protection worker must do is remove children from their home. Even after a child has been sexually or physically abused or neglected, leaving their home can be a traumatic experience; everyone is affected by it, the worker, the parents and the children who are being rescued. Even when you feel you are doing the right thing with conviction, your belief and professional knowledge does not make it any easier. That's why what happened the summer before I left child protection is so important to me.

In the early 2000's, I had taken protective custody of a sibling group from their home because of an abusive situation. One of the children had a very distinctive spelling to her name. You can imagine my surprise 10 years later when I came across the same spelling of the name while reviewing an intern application. "No," I said to myself, "it can't be," So like a good investigator and supervisor I went straight to SACWIS to look it up. And yes, the name and the date matched exactly. I had already scheduled an interview with this young lady for her internship and decided to move forward.

Towards the end of the interview I asked her, "Do you remember me, do you know

who I am?" Her answer brought tears to my eyes. "Yes," she said. "You are the reason I am here. You removed me from my mother's care and I am so grateful. You, my foster mother and my caseworker helped me so much."

"Are you sure you want to do your internship here?" I asked. After all I thought, she can't possibly have pleasant memories of her time here. She was interviewed here and met with the police and CCAC support staff here. Nevertheless, she had determinedly set her course and wanted this experience. She completed her internship successfully and wrote a beautiful dedication to me in a farewell card.

I believe we both came full circle... closed it and moved on.

Please send any work-related encouraging or motivational stories you would like to share and we may publish them in the next issue of *Noticias!*

Don't forget to change any client names before submitting your story to julia.monzon@illinois.gov

Trauma: Caseworkers experience it too



By Julia Camacho

(UPDATED REPRINT)

Trauma is the emotional reaction to traumatic stress, violent crimes, infectious disease outbreaks and other dangerous and life-threatening events. Caseworkers and other social service workers experience trauma directly and indirectly in relation to the work they do. Examples of direct trauma are trauma induced by public sources such as the court system, law enforcement and the medical profession. These sources often do not support the caseworker and may criticize the work they do especially when they are not in agreement with the worker. Workers can also suffer from organizational trauma, which includes high caseloads, high expectations and scarce resources. Many times, workers experience hopelessness and little chance of success. Most trauma experienced by caseworkers is indirect. Indirect trauma is trauma experienced second-hand, usually through exposure to others who have experienced trauma directly. Examples include:

COMPASSION FATIGUE is a term used to encompass different forms of indirect trauma. Charles Figley refers to compassion fatigue as the “cost of caring.” The very act of being compassionate and empathetic exacts

a cost. The very essence of empathy and caring make one susceptible to his or her own feelings. Some researchers feel that compassion fatigue is an occupational hazard for the helping professions.

Compassion fatigue is also known as secondary traumatic stress, vicarious traumatization and secondary survivor stress. Compassion fatigue is an emotional stress response from exposure to client trauma and crisis that leads to a decrease in the ability to empathize with others.

BURNOUT is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion that closely resembles compassion fatigue. Burnout develops over time and repeated exposure to trauma. Burnout leads to depersonalization or flat affect in workers, which is evident in their relationships with clients and co-workers and in their personal relationships. Other symptoms are a lack of energy and commitment to the job. Burnout needs to be treated seriously, it is extremely difficult if not impossible for some people to recover from burnout while working in the same job position. We often see the result of this as workers change from one position to another and leave the

field altogether while not abandoning their commitment to child welfare.

VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION when defined separately from compassion fatigue generally refers to changes in one’s own world view after being exposed to clients’ traumatic material. An example would be being afraid to walk alone after dark in a certain neighborhood when you previously felt safe and at ease.

A **CONTAGION EFFECT** occurs when the worker over-identifies with the client’s feelings and the worker experiences parallel feelings of his or her own.

What I call the **HISTORICAL TRAUMA Effect** is an important thing we learn in the helping professions. We tend to view the world based on our own personal trauma or adverse childhood experiences. Awareness and self-care prevent triggering emotional responses of our own.

Many caseworkers are at risk for compassion fatigue when they do not allow themselves an outlet for job and personal stress. In other words, self-care.

National Youth Advocate Programs

Continuity of Care

By Jennifer M. Contreras

National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP) has been working diligently servicing families, adolescents and children coast-to-coast in states such as Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Kentucky and Illinois. With many communities in need of services, NYAP's goal is to continue to expand their programs into many more states throughout our nation. Dr. Mubarak Awad is the founder and former president of the National Youth Advocate Program in the United States. The organization developed out of the Ohio Youth Advocate Program (OYAP) established by Awad in 1978. NYAP's programs and services are designed to embrace the philosophy that the primary focus must be holistically placed on both preserving and unifying families and strengthening the communities they call home.

NYAP in Illinois has most recently began two programs that are being offered to the community, the Outpatient Mental Health Services (OPMH) and the Flex Fund Cash Assistance Program (FFCA). The OPMH and FFCA programs focus on continuity of care to families served.

NYAP has always provided bilingual counseling services to the community. Nevertheless, the OPMH program is now Medicaid-approved and it allows the client to remain with the same provider for a short or extensive amount of time, as recommended by the provider. The OPMH programs available to children, adolescents and adults are individual and family therapy, crisis intervention support,



mental health case management and comprehensive assessment services.

The FFCA program offered at NYAP is available to all foster care (intact and placement) cases to prevent substitute care, promote family reunification, stabilize foster care placements, facilitate youth development and ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children. The FFCA (Flex Fund) program encourages permanency by maintaining, solidifying and protecting the functionality of families. Some of the Flex Fund services include, but

are not limited to, mentors and other para-professionals, transportation, enrichment activities and non-traditional therapeutic-like services.

These services are designed to meet the individual needs of the child and family consistent with best child welfare best practices. If you would like more information please visit

www.nyap.org.

Meet Celmira Bolanos-Ayala



By Evelyn
Martinez

I whole-
heartedly
nominated
Celmira
Bolanos-Ayala
for DCFS
worker of
the year. She

has worked for the Department of Children and Family Services for almost 30 years and is currently a DCFS child protection investigator in the Cook North office at Deerfield. She has spent the majority of her professional experience with DCFS in child protection and has a master's degree in counseling. Celmira has a whole lifetime aside from her history with DCFS helping children and families both here in the U.S. as well as in her native country of Colombia. At a young age, she dedicated herself to working with the rampant and forgotten homeless youth who lived in extreme poverty in the streets of Colombia. She would often buy them something to eat out of her own pocket just so they could survive another day. I met Celmira many years ago shortly after I joined DCFS. Oftentimes, we were among the few, the proud... of less than a handful of bilingual child protection investigators wherever we worked. Celmira is that colleague who

would call you to make sure you were ok while you were out in the field. She often offered support, time and suggestions or referrals for helping the children and families we met.

Celmira is famous among Spanish-speaking communities! I would encounter families who had no idea what DCFS was but they would tell me they heard of a silver-haired petite Latina woman who was known to take children if their parents abused them. Celmira is a fierce child protection investigator, always putting children's safety and well-being first. She works endless hours outside of 8:30 to 5 to make sure she has turned over every stone in assuring children are safe. Law enforcement often speak very highly of her and look forward to working investigations along with her because they knew she would do an excellent job.

When Celmira can't find a resource to help a family, she would call on her own family and friends for help to locate furniture, clothing and toys for needy families. Celmira often spends a lot of her time in December delivering toys and gifts to needy families regardless of the outcome of their investigation. She gets her retired husband to help drive and deliver these gifts throughout the holiday season in sleet and snow.

Celmira is a pretty busy woman even after the work day is done. She is the primary caretaker for her elderly mother whom she cares for in her home. Even though she coordinates help while she is at work she is 100 percent responsible for her care. When most people go home to rest, you can find Celmira and her husband cooking and delivering meals and visiting the sick or disabled members of their families

I have come to realize that it may take a lot of savvy and smarts to do the daily work of a child protection investigator, but it takes a very special person like Celmira to make lasting impressions that impact children and families' lives the way that she does. She has become a mentor to me and to many others who have met her. She offers her invaluable knowledge and experience to those who are willing to receive it. As the most selfless and generous person in child protection that I know, she is a great example and inspiration. I am so lucky to call her my friend and I hope you will agree that she was very deserving of this recognition as she served the Department in this way for 30 years. Celmira happily retired at the end of 2018 and still enjoys helping others and traveling.



30TH ANNIVERSARY MERCHANDISE NOW AVAILABLE AT [DCFS.SPREADSHIRT.COM](https://dcfs.spreadshirt.com)

- Anniversary Duffle Bags
- Ceramic Full-Color Coffee Mugs

\$2 from every item purchased goes to the Children's Fund.

2019 Illinois Latino Statewide Events

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	ORGANIZER/CONTACT
JUN 13-16	12 pm	Fiestas Puertorriqueñas	Humboldt Park	Puerto Rican Parade Committee
JUN 15	10 am	¡Vive tu Vida! Get up! Get Moving! 6th Annual National Event	McKinley Park 2210 W Pershing Rd	Chicago Hispanic Health Coalition National Alliance for Hispanic Health
JUN 15	12 pm	41st Annual Puerto Rican People's Parade	Division St	Puerto Rican Parade Committees
JUN 15	6:30 pm	30th Anniversary Alivio Medical Center Celebration	Art Institute of Chicago	Alivio Medical Center
JUN 21-23	11 am	Centro American Festival	Mozart Park, Chicago	Central American Committee
JUN 21-23	6 pm	Ruido Fest	Medill Park, Pilsen	Ruido Group
JUN 30	3 pm	3rd Annual Chicago Mariachi Festival	Millennium Park	City of Chicago
JUN 30	11 am	Honduras Festival	Riis Park, Chicago	Honduran Consulate
JUL 19-21	11 am	5th Annual Colombian Festival	Kelvyn Park, Chicago	Colombian Committee
JUL 25-28	12 pm	Fiesta Del Sol	Cermak Rd & Loomis St	Pilsen Neighbors
AUG 9-11	12 pm	Cuban Festival	Piis Park, Chicago	Cuban Fest Chicago
AUG 15	5:30 pm	SER's Annual Fundraiser – Sabor, Color y Cultura	Puerto Rican Cultural Center Chicago	Central States SER Jobs for Progress
AUG 17-18	12 pm	Pilsen Fest	18th St & Blue Island Av	PilsenFest.com
AUG 23-25	12 pm	Milwaukee Mexican Festival	Lakefront Park, Milwaukee	City of Milwaukee
AUG 24	11 am	Villapalooza	26th St & Central Park Chicago	Little Village Chamber of Commerce
SEP 6-8	6 pm	Fiesta de la Villita	26th St & Kostner Av Chicago	Little Village Chamber of Commerce
SEP 8	9 am	Annual Mexican Independence Day Breakfast <i>(By Invitation)</i>	Mi Tierra Restaurant 2528 S Kedzie Av, Chicago	Little Village Chamber of Commerce
SEP 8	12 pm	50th Annual Mexican Independence Day Parade & Festival	26th St, from Kedzie to Kostner	Little Village Chamber of Commerce



30TH ANNIVERSARY MERCHANDISE NOW AVAILABLE AT DCFS.SPREADSHIRT.COM

- Women's V-Neck Shirts
- Men's Premium Shirts
- Men's Moisture-Wick Shirts

\$2 from every item purchased goes to the Children's Benefit Fund.

Head Start Enrollment for School Year 2019-20 **NOW OPEN.**



By *Vanessa Castro*

This is the time for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Service (DCFS) and private agency (POS) child welfare staff to refer children and families to their local Head Start/Early Head Start programs. Head Start's enrollment for school year 2019-2020 is now open. Visit the Head Start/ Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLC) website, <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator>, to locate a Head Start or Early Head Start program in your area or contact the DCFS School Readiness Team through the Office of Education and Transition Services in your region to help locate a program. Please see below for contact information to the school readiness specialist in your region.

Exposing children to high quality early childhood learning programs is important. Early childhood programs establish the foundation for future academic success. The first 2,000

days from birth to kindergarten are a critical time for learning. Early childhood development is emphasized because 90 percent of a child's brain develops during the first five years of life. Research has shown that by age three a child's vocabulary can predict third grade achievement.

Youth in care who meet program age requirements are automatically eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start programs. DCFS and the Office of Head Start have an Intergovernmental Agreement which gives priority to DCFS-involved children and families. Youth in care, children involved with Intact Family Services and DCFS children of parenting teens are still eligible for Head Start even if that child's third birthday is after September 1 of the academic year.

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE NEEDED FOR HEAD START ENROLLMENT:

- Birth certificate
- Medical card
- Proof of address/ CFS 906
- Current physical and dental
- Immunization records
- TB, hemoglobin and lead test

SCHOOL READINESS TEAM BY REGION

Statewide School Readiness Administrator

Mary Beth Corrigan
mary.corrigan@illinois.gov
630-801-3480

Cook County & Central Region School Readiness Specialist

Martha Cerda-Babbington:
martha.cerda-babbington@illinois.gov
708-338-6630

Northern & Southern Region
(temporarily assignment)

School Readiness Specialist

Vanessa Castro
vanessa.castro@illinois.gov
847-931-2003

Latino Advisory Council Members 1988–2019



We would like to acknowledge the original Hispanic Advisory Committee and the Workers Reaching for Excellence.

Anita Acosta
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Deo Velez
Rebecca Villagomez-Crnovich
Rubi Viveros

*Current LAC member

2018 Latino Professional Development Day Gallery



Martha Cerda-Babington (left) and Vanessa Castro



*Marcia Pantell, LCSW, PhD,
Associate Professor and Chair-Social Work
and Addictions Counseling*



Karla Soriano (podium)



Claudia Ramirez



Anne Gold

Gallery (cont)



Alex Medina



Dulce Patrón



St. Augustine College hosted the 2018 Latino Pro Day.



Conference attendees, General Session



Julia Monzón directing her seminar on "Defining Child Abuse".

Service Milestones

Congratulations

5 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Rosalva Acevedo, Chicago
- Flor Amezcua, Aurora
- Robert Barasa, Chicago
- Olivia Chavez, Maywood
- Rogelio Guerrero Jr., Aurora
- Moises Jimenez, Maywood
- Aracely Madrigal, Maywood
- Angela Moncada (*Ex-DCFS*)
- Yesenia Perez, Chicago
- Migdalia Soto, Chicago
- Bert Tijerina, Chicago

15 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Carolina Bobo, Deerfield
- Marcia Burjes, Carlinville
- Jose Chacko, Glen Ellyn
- Ada Perez-al-Muhtaseb, Chicago
- Sergio Valente, Glen Ellyn

20 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Nancy Rodriguez, Chicago

25 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Victor Aranda, Chicago
- Jeanette Camarillo, Deerfield
- Susan Mellema, Chicago
- Ana Martell, Chicago
- Evelyn Martinez, Glen Ellyn
- Jose Oropezza, Chicago
- Monica Pedigo, Springfield
- Pedro Pedraza, Rockford
- Lisa Vargas, Waukegan

30 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Susan Alejandro, Chicago
- Celmira Bolanos-Ayala (*Retired*)

35 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Sylvia Fonseca, Chicago



312.814.6800

www2.illinois.gov/DCFS

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NOTICIAS is brought to you by the Latino Advisory Council and the Illinois Department

of Children and Family Services. It is distributed to DCFS employees, POS agencies and agencies affiliated with DCFS. The newsletter includes articles pertinent to child welfare, Latino welfare issues and DCFS/ POS programs, and strives to be an informative source for staff by providing updates on new child welfare initiatives as well as upcoming events.

It is our hope to continue providing staff with a vehicle for the sharing of information. A major part of this endeavor is you! We are asking for your input, submission of articles and suggestions for improving Noticias. Articles related to your experiences with families and personal stories are also greatly appreciated.

Please submit articles, information about incoming events or news to: Julia Camacho Monzón, Strategic Communications Committee Chair julia.monzon@illinois.gov 1911 S. Indiana Ave. Chicago, IL 60616

Or to any of the **Strategic Communication Committee members:**

Julia Camacho Monzón, editor, chair; José J. López, final editor, Patricia Boscan, co-editor, Vanessa Castro, former scribe and contributing writer, Azalea Mejia, scribe, Jennifer Contreras, contributing writer, Nancy Rodríguez, LAC chair.

If you would like more information or would like to participate in one of the LAC subcommittees, please contact Nancy Rodriguez, LAC Chair at nancy.rodriguez@illinois.gov or any LAC member.

Special thanks to:

Bert Tijerina, graphic designer, Office of Communications; José J. López, DCFS Office of Latino Services and Daniel Fitzgerald, Deputy Director, Office of Affirmative Action